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NEWSZINE

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THE HORROR! THE HORROR!

THIS ISSUE:
- MODERN MINIONS OF CTHULHU
- VECNA'S DOMAIN
- NEW MASQUE KITS
AND MORE!

Polyhedron® NEWSZINE

Volume 16
Number 9
Issue 124

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TSR, Inc.

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your Initiative

More very fine letters this month from old-timers and young-timers. The letters keep pouring in! Keep 'em coming!

To POLYHEDRON® Newszine:

I've been a subscriber for several years now and the magazine is a hit and miss for me, as I'm sure it is for most readers. After all, I know that no matter how hard you try, you can only please most of the people some of the time.

Since you're asking for feedback on what we'd like from the Newszine, I'd like to see *Forgotten Deities* and *Elminster's Everwinking Eye* move about to other worlds such as GREYHAWK®, DRAGONLANCE®, MYSTARA®, LANKHMAR, and even BIRTHRIGHT®, PLANESCAPE®, and DARK SUN® (although the latter three have their own line of support).

The FORGOTTEN REALMS® is a wonderful place, but with so much coverage in DRAGON® magazine and its own line, it does not need further additions in this magazine's fine pages.

In addition, I'd like to see more reprinted material from older issues, or perhaps a solid Best Of, in the tradition of old Best of DRAGON magazines.

For myself, I would prefer to see generic adventures using no stats until the end, at which point several game systems could be covered at once (i.e. GURPS, Hero, Rolemaster, Runequest, AD&D®, etc.)

I'd also like to see more gaming related material that can be placed in into a campaign with a little work. This includes things like new monsters, magical items, spells, psionics, kits, classes, NPCs, cities, and local and unique things like artifacts or special beasties.

Yours truly,
Joe G. Kushner
Chicago, IL

***Forgotten Deities* is on the move, even as we speak. Look for GREYHAWK deities in the near future, and more fun and surprises in the far future.**

Actually Joe, you ask for an interesting mix... more TSR world-specific information in our regular columns, and more generic information in other places. What does everyone else think about that? Which is more useful for you, and at what percentage would you like to see the mix? 50/50? 20/80? 100/0?

Dear Sirs:

I have never attended any big tournaments or conventions. I enjoy playing AD&D and Shadowrun, but am willing to try anything new. My question is, what kind of things do you take to a tourney/convention? Do I take premade characters or what? If so, how do I know they're acceptable? Thanks.

Justyn Stahl
Godfrey, IL

Sometimes I think we forget that there are non-congoers out there. Cons are easy. Just show up!

Bring your dice, bring some money, and GO. You sign up for time slots (or "slots") in games you want to play. Different games are offered at different times, so you have to figure out what you want to play and when. Almost all tournaments hand you characters when you sit down at the table. Slots run for 4 hours, and if you haven't finished the tournament by then, everybody just stops. If you have downtime between games you might want to visit seminars, go to the dealers room, or maybe even eat.

There's tons more to know, but the best way to learn is to use the convention contact information here in the Newszine to write a con for details, and then show up and play! Good luck!

It's great to see the letters page back in POLYHEDRON, and in particular, some healthy debate going on for a change. I think that it's essential for a continuing forum to be available to RPGA® members, and it looks like *Your Initiative* is turning out to be an excellent starting point. Here's a pet concern of my own for other members to consider.

To me, one of the reasons for the phenomenal success of the CCG market (and Magic: The Speculating in particular) is perhaps not just its collectability or playability, but its availability. Walk into any gaming shop and you'll always find a player or three to have a game with. Sadly, it used to be like that with the RPG hobby as well. Back in the early days (I've been at this since 1977), you could always find other players for the main RPGs of the day ("Wanna play D&D®, or Traveller?"). Nowadays it's not so simple.

Even the (dare I say most?) popular AD&D game has its own problems. With the number of published AD&D worlds now available (including many Oh! So Lovingly Dropped by TSR), just try and get a few together to play a session or two of AL-QADIM®, SPELLJAMMER® or D&D—it's nearly impossible (your own classifieds section would seem to confirm this...). If the most popular systems have problems getting players, where does that leave smaller gaming companies (anyone for Castle Falkenstein? Millenium's End? GURPS Celtic Myth?).

Is part of the problem the huge learning curve required to get into many of these settings? If a player (or more specifically, the GM) is going to make the effort to purchase, learn and run some sessions with a new game, he's got to be sure that he's going to have some players. So, is she going to take a risk or is she going to play it safe and possibly miss out on an opportunity for a whole new gaming experience? The money only stretches so far...

OK, fellow RPGA members, here are the issues that I'd like to put up for discussion. Are there too many RPGs on the market? Is there room for more? How does a small gaming company last longer than a few weeks in this fickle market? Is there a solution to player availability? I'd love to hear other opinions in the letters page.

Lee Sheppard
Western Australia

Lee is possibly our only Western Australian member, and coincidentally an assistant editor for Australia's own gaming magazine, *Australian Realms*. They were kind enough to send me copies, and it gets my big stamp o' approval as a nifty magazine. They even produce their own role-playing settings (sorta backwards from how it normally happens).

So, Lee obviously has a vested interest in making sure this RPG thing sticks around. I mean, not that the rest of us don't.

Dear RPGA:
Regarding the recent desire for feedback on POLYHEDRON and the LIVING™ campaigns...

The recent issues of POLYHEDRON have been much more interesting than those I have seen in the past. Perhaps it was the snazzy colors, or perhaps the writing improved, or perhaps it was the clever/obsequious comments by the editor.... In any case, it was better.

In general, I believe that the LIVING campaigns are somewhat... lacking. I'm not sure exactly what they lack, but I will outline what I see as the pros and cons. First—it's exciting to try and develop a character from convention to convention—to see the growth and to (somewhat) simulate the at home gaming experience. In general, people will play the personality/character/class that comes most naturally to them, so there is potential for some really fun role playing. It can be exciting to try and advance your character's status in RAVENS BLUFF™, *the* largest campaign setting in the known world (I doubt any home campaigns have the same number of players, though of course I may underestimate some extraordinary GMs). That said, I won't feel as badly when I outline the problems....

While it's nice to simulate the at home gaming experience, there are several points where RAVENS BLUFF (and other settings) fail to do so.

First, a typical campaign has continuity of players and events. A typical LIVING weekend goes something like this: Adventure 1: Trek through the snow bound wastes to foil the plotting of an evil sorceress; Adventure 2: With a completely different set of adventurers, recover a holy dwarven stone. Villains (typically the foils which prompt intense role playing) do not last longer than a single scenario. The characters rarely have past experiences with each other, so old rivalries, family feuds, lost relatives, and other plot and drama spurring devices rarely come into play.

What remains? The treasure. Yes, your character may not develop any lasting bonds with a trusty group of like minded individuals, but s/he can certainly amass bunches of magical stuff.

Moving from the material to the immaterial, we arrive at personality. One of the best things about tournament gaming is the element of surprise. You sit at the table and confidently cry, "I'll take the elf," only to discover that he's a swarthy, unshaven, grumpy dwarf-like elf. Pregenerated characters can shake you out of your mold, bump you from your rut, etc.

Given the opportunity, I will play the semi-pious, cynical human with the dry sense of humor and a big mace every time. Does this really expand my horizons?

You can try to create an "against type" character, but it's difficult to stand by the choice without a group of regular gamers to call you on it. A final personality gripe: people tend to be a bit obsessive with their characters' treasure (to the detriment of personality). An example: one group had two fighters, neither of whom I could describe, except by their +X weapons.

To condense the above and distill a conclusion:

I am, in general, unsatisfied with the LIVING formats, as they steal focus away from characters, histories, personalities and emotions. They then place the focus on acquisition of experience, accumulation of magical items and wealth, and encourage doggedly completing the scenario in the time allotted.

This is, of course, colored by my experiences and all my humble opinion.

Jason Reynolds
reynoldj@river.it.gvsu.edu

Obsequious comments? Well, if you say so, Mr. Reynolds, sir...

Dear Members:

Issue 122 of POLYHEDRON caused me to think of a few things that I felt should be brought to the attention of the Network, on the subject of Ongoing Tournament Campaigns.

First of all, the "big ones" that the RPGA sponsors (LIVING CITY™, LIVING DEATH™, LIVING JUNGLE™, Threads of Legend, Virtual Seattle) are not the only ones out there. Game Base 7, a Chicago based Network Club (formerly known as MGM, Grand Gaming Association) is currently running the *Sparks* campaign, using West End Games' rules for Star Wars: The Roleplaying Game, and is considering starting similar games in PLANESCAPE, Champions, and Middle Earth Roleplaying. I wanted to bring this up to inform other groups of these campaigns and to see if other clubs are sponsoring similar games of their own; if you aren't, it might be worth considering. I've had a great deal of fun running and writing scenarios for *Sparks*.

The other point that I wanted to mention is this: given the popularity of these LIVING games and the apparent popularity of horror games, it seems odd (to me) that the only horror game in this list is the RPGA LIVING DEATH. There are many other fine Horror RPGs out there (Call of Cthulhu, Chill, Whatever Palladium is calling their offering currently, Bureau 13: Stalking the Night Fantastic, Night Life, It Came from the Late, Late, Late Show, Whispering Vault, etc.). Would there be any interest in establishing such campaigns within the Network? I would be interested in helping to establish Chill or Call of Cthulhu campaigns if there would be a following for such (I lack the experience or familiarity with the other systems to make this offer there, though I'd be interested in playing in most of these!); anyone wanting to discuss this can e-mail me, or you can just pester HQ until they will discuss it.

Yours truly,
Charles Brown
IGiveIn@aol.com

RPGA Network:

I really hope you can make all those changes you professed to wish in issue 120. I've been tempted to cancel my membership lately as the generic articles like *The Living Galaxy* dried up and disappeared, and issue 121 was almost completely LIVING JUNGLE. I agree whole-heartedly with what you said about how this is the RPGA and not the TSRPGA.

You wanted input, I've got a few ideas.

1). Open it up. Ask for articles, features on all games in a big noticeable way. Do some specific competitions for other games systems to attract interest.

2). Kick RPGA UK/Europe up the backside, OR give them the ability to do their own POLYHEDRON.

3). Get some European material for some European style backgrounds in TSR games. LANKHMAR, RAVENLOFT®, and Red Death could all benefit from a real old-world feel.

4). Give out player/judge points in competitions and article submissions as well.

Best wishes, hope the changes come through.

James Desborough
Grim@postmort.demon.co.uk

I hope I can make those changes too. After a few months here, I've realized some are more useful than others.

For instance, now I think game reviews aren't necessarily the best use of space in the Newszine. So, some of my big ideas are just big in storage now. But they'll be back.

I'm still wide open for articles on just about any game. However, many submissions I receive are for AD&D. You know, I've got no problem with that. AD&D material seems to be what many members want. That's cool.

European-style backgrounds would be hunky-dorey, too. Anybody want to try his or her hand at a Gothic Earth European travelogue?

—Jeff

NEWScene

▶ Our club changed its name from "O.R.E." (which stood for the Organization of Roleplaying Enthusiasts, which is kind of lame, so we decided to make the E change at every convention, so we've been Elvises, Elephants, Echinoderms, Ernie, and many, many more) to "Dead Last."

We picked the name because we want to hear awards announcers say, "And in first place... Dead Last!" Its also what we want to be (the last ones dead. Primitive survival instinct!). We almost changed the name to "peanut butter and flumph," which is only funny if:

1. you're from the northeast and know what marshmallow fluff is;
2. you've ever had a fluffernutter sandwich, which is made of peanut butter and fluff;
3. you hate flumphs.

Luckily for our dignity, common sense won out over amused satire.

Other than that, our club has done diddley.

—Kevin Kulp
Massachusetts & Rhode Island Co-Regional Director

▶ Gamers at Book World bookstore in Fairborn, Ohio donated their time and money to help fight Muscular Dystrophy over the Labor Day weekend. An AD&D tournament and a Warhammer 40K miniatures battle were held. The proceeds from the games and sales of sandwiches (donated by Subway) and soft drinks raised $350 for charity.

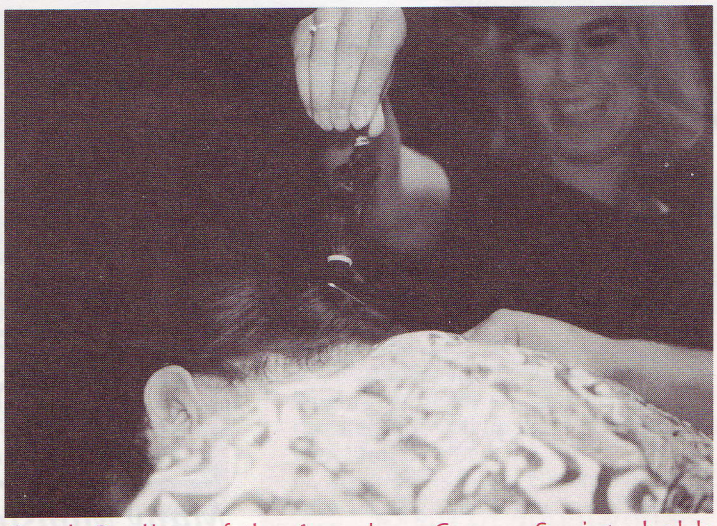
Originally, the miniatures battle was the only scheduled event, but some individuals who played roleplaying games at the store decided they wanted to help raise money and developed the event.

Rick Martin and Sean Johnson wrote an interesting one round AD&D tournament. The authors and Mike Simko acted as judges. The module involved a plot to murder a local official who was making trouble for the thieves guild. My table accomplished its mission, but I was the only PC alive at the conclusion. I spoke to the author about submitting the event for Network sanctioning, but he plans to try to sell it to DUNGEON magazine.

The RPGA Network provided prizes for winners. Membership applications and sample POLYHEDRON issues were on display to attract new RPGA members. Several individuals even expressed interest in joining.

Store owner Dave Harris coordinated the events and provided support. Dave has already begun planning for 1997, and hopes to raise at least $500 at next year's event.

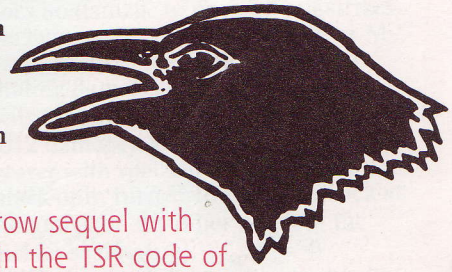
—Ed Gibson
Ohio Regional Director



Sarah Detling of the American Cancer Society holds Scott's ponytail for Don Bingle to chop off. Members joined with Don to raise $635 to chop off the offending hank (read Scott's con review pg. 29).

▶ Following are the 1996 GEN CON® game fair RPGA Pinnacle Event Winners:

West End Games Champion
Toby Wolff
FASA Games Champion
Jeff Hughes
LIVING JUNGLE™ Champion
Cindy Hemedinger
LIVING DEATH™ Champion
Dan Donnelly
Top Network Player:
Scott Dulac
AD&D Feature Top Judge
Rocky Lange
AD&D Special Top Judge
Laurie Fox
Masters Top Judge
David Kelman
Grandmasters Top Judge
Drew Caldwell
AD&D Open Top Judge
Jean Gray
West End Games Top Judge
Floyd Wesel
FASA Games Top Judge
Wes Nicholson
LIVING CITY Top Judge
Dave Schnur
Top Network Judge:
Tony Davidson
Highest Average Points Judge
Elizabeth Patterson
Network Club Event
1st place—Company of Framed Adventurers
Eric Gershik
Kilim Altman
William McCaig
Eric Friedlander
Andrew Coleman
Jeff Berg
2nd place—Sexton Everett
Reuben Kinder
Joe Zelmer
Korey Kennedy
Jeffery Kennedy
Jonathon Woodard
Chris Daogherty
3rd place—The Greybeards
Tory Janke
Jason Davies
Tonia Lopez-Fresquer
Weston Peterson
Jeff Prouty
Rick Brill



Done something worth crowing about? Had to eat some crow? Go see the Crow sequel with your RPGA club? Write about it! If it's Network related (and stays safely within the TSR code of ethics), send it in, and we'll print it here in the new NEWScene.

The Border Kingdoms

Elminster's Everwinking Eye

Hawkgarth

by Ed Greenwood

Hawkgarth has enough legends of treasure and knowledge to make even hardened warriors and mages take notice. And take heed.

Named for the adventurer who founded it (a famous pirate and soldier of fortune), Hawkgarth was long known as "the Wood of Many Monsters." Die-hard hunters came here by the score to battle the last giant owlbears, giant stags, greater perytons, and other rare and deadly predators.

The monsters dwelt here because of an earlier mage, Histokle Rireetha (said to be a refugee from Netheril who survives in Hawkgarth, as a demi-lich). Histokle assembled them to serve as guardians for his floating manor. He brought deepspawn in by the score to disgorge minor beasts to feed his monsters, and keep them around.

Hawkgarth Today

Today, travelers find Hawkgarth a region of cherry and apple farms, woodlots, and winding lanes along the southern bank of the River Scelptar. Hawkgarth's grave is a grassy barrow, almost all of the woods and the monsters are gone, and Histokle's manor house is an open-roofed, ruined shell that floats about fifty feet above a bog.

The manor attracts adventurers and sages. Its fading magics bring forth phantom images of those who cast spells there an age ago, and beings brought forth by Histokle's arts. Such silent visions are numerous by moonlight.

Many adventurers brave the ruined manor when the moon is high because the entrance to Histokle's hidden lair is reputed to be through a "moon-gate:" a magical portal that is only visible (and operable) when moonlight shines on a certain secret spot in the ruins.

Histokle's Manor

Histokle's lair is said to be a labyrinth of rooms that contain several guardian monsters (cloakers, bone nagas, living walls, and monster zombies are likely); treasure (the pillars are said to hide wands, new and strange potions, and spellbooks in storage niches); a large metal automaton which may be the fabled Mighty Servant of Leuk-o, though lacking written instructions); an enchanted throne said to randomly augment an ability of any being who dares sit upon it, once; and—floating watchfully above it—the demi-lich himself.

The reason many powerful mages seek out the manor is not (primarily) to gain its treasure however, but to survive an hour on Histokle's throne, keeping the demi-lich at bay by giving interesting answers to Histokle's questions about the Realms. The lonely undead mage obviously retains far more awareness and sanity than most liches who have degenerated to his "floating skull" state,

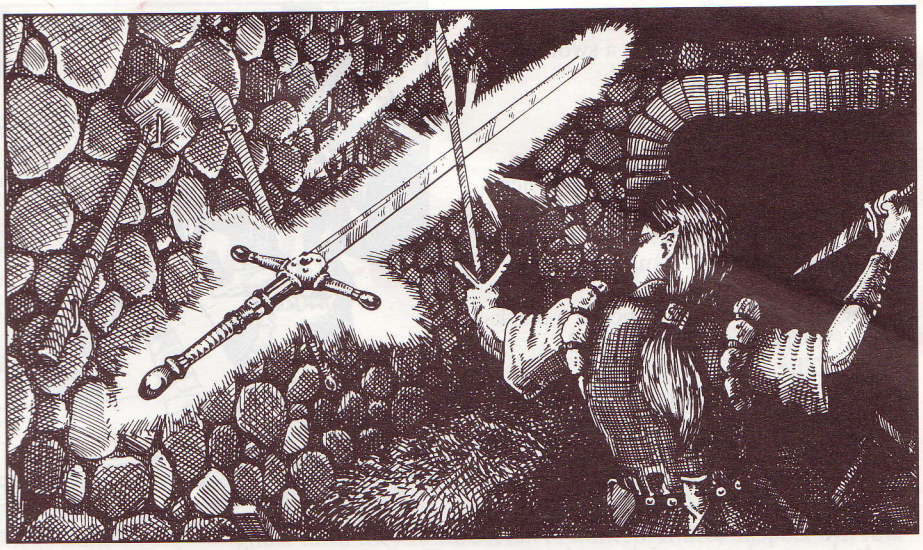
and can carry on long conversations, appreciate jokes and well-told anecdotes, and exhibit curiosity and even envy. He is quite willing to hear alternative information offered by an intruding mage instead of "I don't know," so long as it is interesting.

The ability augmentation of the throne apparently occurs instantly upon posterior-to-seat contact, but doesn't manifest until the being sleeps and then awakens. However, mages who remain alive on the throne for a continuous hour gain immediate, detailed knowledge of all magical items and artifacts they wear or carry. No hidden power or unawakened ability is omitted, and every command word or procedure is impressed into the sitter's memory.

Where the throne came from, and who gave it this power, are mysteries. There are persistent rumors that the divine hand of Oghma himself had something to do with it. Others insist it was Azuth, or Mystra and Oghma together, or that it is the last surviving manifestation of the great power that once belonged to Savras the All-Seeing. Given the fate of the last few priests who examined the throne, it seems likely that its genesis will remain a mystery.

Sometimes—as when those openly purporting to be priests visit—Histokle delights in destroying visitors, and on other occasions he seems merely to want to talk. Wherever his lair really is, *teleport* spells will safely take intruders back out of it to Faerûn, but *dimension door* and *passwall* spells that breach the "walls" cause vortices of wild magic that strip casters naked (removing all items to an unknown place) and whirl them off to a random destination in the Realms, often badly injured.

A few mages have so impressed or befriended Histokle that he gave them spells, as a "boon" in their minds (this



"extra spell" is a single-use summoning of one of Histokle's guardian beasts, typically a gargoyle or beholder-kin. The guardian will perform even suicidal acts for the caster without hesitation).

One such mage was the sorceress Harathralee of Calimport, who agreed to provide Histokle with a child of her own birthing for him to raise as an heir. If the demi-lich's plan proceeds, he will one day give his knowledge mind-to-mind to his heir, and pass into eternal sleep.

Hawkgarth's Death

After founding his town, Hawkgarth battled continually to prevent its capture by greedy local tyrants seeking to best the old soldier.

In his final, most memorable clash, Hawkgarth himself slaughtered a dozen would-be "successors," and died of the wounds he took hewing down the forces of the thirteenth.

After his bodyguard was ambushed and killed, Hawkgarth alone held a covered bridge over the River Mauraurin (today little more than a dry creekbed) against the invaders, slaying over sixty knights before dusk. When he then threatened to call up the dead to fight with him, they fled.

His knights found Hawkgarth hours later, leaning against one rail of the bridge, sword in hand and white as a ghost—stone dead. His blood lay in a pool around him. One of them put on the King's armor, and the rest mounted a guard around him. As the invaders made one cautious foray in the new day, they saw the King standing on the bridge with swords all around him, and decided to seek easier lands to rule.

The spot is still known as the Ghost Bridge. Hawkgarthans believe that loyal subjects who were born in the realm can receive guidance there. If they go to the bridge by night and humbly offer their sword to the King, it is said they will see the phantom of Hawkgarth the Mighty in his plate armor, sword in hand—and hear him whisper words of wisdom before he fades away.

Hawkgarth's barrow-tomb is said to hold treasure, a cursed, floating longsword, the Aershivar Blackblade. The Blackblade can be taken by the adventurer who defeats its watch-ghost guardian, but must soon be returned to its resting place, or it will emit new ghosts to attack its wielder, and find its own way back to hovering above Hawkgarth's casket.

One account says that the Blackblade does no damage to undead, but strikes the living at +2 to hit, for 2d8 (S or M-sized) or 2d12 (L-sized) slicing and chilling damage. Once a day it can deliver a shrewd strike (a +5 attack, 4d12 damage), and can defend its wearer with spell turning (one magical attack only, turned 100% either back at the source or any other target of the wielder's choosing).

Those travelers who find such tales too fanciful can avoid the Floating

Aye, I remember the Border Realms. We were deep in the Hawkgarth woods before I discovered our commander had been replaced by a succubus... What d'you mean, how'd I find out?

Urdagus Malawree
adventurer of Nimpeth
speaking in The Rum Duck tavern
Year of the Turret

Shadow Bog and the stone doors graven with a crown transfixed on a sword, leading into Hawkgarth Hill.

Government and Citizenry

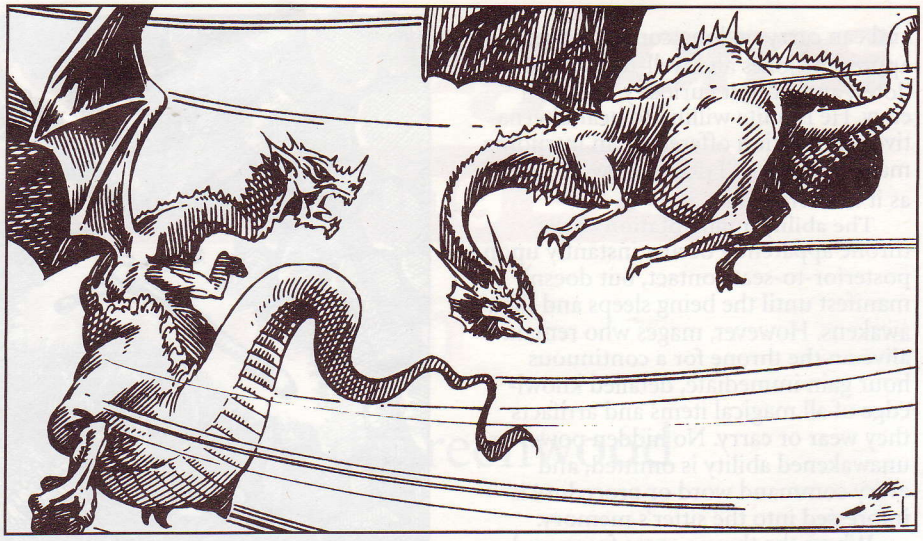
Settlements in Hawkgarth are few; everything is spread out. Most travelers eventually find their ways to one or both of two crossroads: Ingletar, at the west end of the realm; and Ambrees, at the east end.

Ingletar offers a horse pond; a blacksmith ("Orlag Harlagus, Shoes & Froes"); The Firefly Down Inn (Good/Moderate); Three Sheaves Tower, a shrine to Chauntea; and a farm market that gathers once a tenday, where travelers can buy all the wares Hawkgarth produces, and more (from traveling wagon-merchants).

Ambrees is home to Jalagar the Wheelwright, famous for his quality wagon wheels; the Old Pipe And Pearls inn (Excellent/Moderate); and the cozy, superior Laughing Unicorn tavern, which is known for the dancing, glowing white unicorn illusion that appears briefly every midnight (thanks to a spell cast long ago by a Harper sorceress, to give a sign to a friend she could not wait longer for). The Unicorn is a favorite of many traveling minstrels of Faerûn, and there's even a ballad about the welcoming sight of its window candles at the end of a long and dangerous ride.

That song's not all that fanciful, either. The one thing that Hawkgarth can boast for its farmers is that some of them are accomplished brigands. They commonly lean down from overhanging tree-boughs to slice straps and lift away baggage, or even cut a horse away from a team when the coachman is asleep.

In some cases, coaches or wagons have crashed into ravines or trees after brigands removed the coachman. The injured or dead occupants have been dealt with at leisure by the cutpurses, who are then free to loot the goods or even right the wagon again and drive it off to a remote barn for stripping.



Elminster's Everwinking Eye

There's even an old Hawkgarthan tale about one brigand band doing this, and then being attacked by a second band who mistook them for merchants. So few survived this clash in the darkness, that only two men were left to take the wagon home, pulled by a single horse—whereupon they were, of course, ambushed by a third cutpurse band.

In recent years, traveling mages have evened the score with some of the more notorious brigands—but the survivors became more wily. Before attacking they often scout out travelers for several stops along the road. As always, travelers are cautioned to hide finery and keep boasting to a minimum to avoid unwanted attention. It should be noted though, that not all Hawkgarthan farmers will stick a blade in a throat when night falls.

All of this creeping about after dark can make Hawkgarth a busy place for lovers seeking seclusion, tramps seeking a quiet haystack to sleep in, and travelers on foot cutting across country. Many farmers have guard dogs who growl and even bay, but not bark. They approach and spring silently, giving tongue only after striking. The spell known as Darvo's Dancing Dogs is said to have been borne from that warrior-mage's desire to enjoy an uninterrupted haystack slumber one summer night in deepest Hawkgarth.

The reputation of Histokle's manor has led some folk to think Hawkgarth has no living mages of note—a mistake, of course. At the very heart of the realm, atop Wrinkled Hill, stands a modest cottage that is home to Ilden Garthammus and his wife Faelrae, who settled here after finding Lapiliiya too crowded for their liking. (both CG W16s) They are actually weredragons, turning into silver wyrms when they feel the need.

That need usually comes either when a wizard decides that Hawkgarth looks ripe for domination, or when an adventuring band, mercenary company, or neighboring ruler decides that Hawkgarth needs a new form of government.

Hawkgarthans are quite content (as the Garthammus family forcibly point out) with their present system of government: all landowners in Hawkgarth nominate and vote for elders among them to be Speakers. To be so named, a candidate must get a thousand votes, out of a population of not quite four thousand voting farmers.

Speakers propose laws and policies for the land in pithy speeches at semi-annual Moots held atop Hawkgarth's Hill. They call for votes, and the Senior Speaker (currently a frail, long-bearded man, Ammanas "Hawk" Halauklyn) tallies all close counts. Law enforcement is handled by the Garthammus family and by the Striking Hawks, a band of locals (all LN hm F4s or F3s) who dwell near Wrinkled Hill. Faelrae Garthammus crafted a spell that allows both she and her husband to hear the ten words that follow the utterance of their names (with the identity and location of the speaker) whenever any Speaker says either of their names within the borders of Hawkgarth. This magic also allows Ilden and Faelrae to hear each other in similar circumstances, and extends to Athkalon Blaykin, the leader of the Striking Hawks.

Most local legends concern the "terrible haunted floating manor" ("I've seen the bodies of dead adventurers falling from it!") or the ghost of Hawkgarth striding from his tomb to right wrongs. Day-to-day Hawkgarthan rumors center on the latest dark plot of nearby rulers who want (again) to conquer Hawkgarth. The rumors are based on previous attempts by various petty rulers in the Border Kingdoms to seize this region of "unprotected" farmland.

Elminster hinted that many smaller tales of treasure and secrets await the patiently inquisitive visitor to pastoral Hawkgarth.

Don't get trampled in the rush, now. ❑

A Few of Our Favorite Things

by Monte Cook

At the '96 GEN CON® Game Fair, some of TSR's finest gaming minds sat as the panel of a seminar: "What's a DM to Do?" Our own Scott Douglas, who was volunteered to be one of those minds, showed me the handout the seminar attendees were given. We all know good article ideas when they fall on us. For those of you who didn't get a chance to attend the seminar (or take copious notes), here is the second installment by PLANESCAPE® setting designer, Monte Cook.

Use Your Environment

While everyone knows that there's a big difference between the player and the character, you can use the environment of the player to enhance the playing of the character. If you want to surprise the characters, surprise the players by jumping at them or yelling suddenly. If it's night, turn down the lights. If they're dying of thirst on Athas, take away their sodas (or whatever they drink at the game). If they're at a feast, pull out some munchies.

Sometimes subtle changes work just as well—and they'll never know they're being manipulated. For example, if they go to a strange, new place that should feel different (or even alien), move the game to a new room for that session—a room you've never gamed in. Don't tell them why. This works well in long-running campaigns because they'll feel a little ill-at-ease (in a good way) and they lose that comfortable, just-another-gaming-night feeling, which will carry over into their feelings about what's going on in the game (whether they realize it or not).

Being a grab bag of tricks, tips, and techniques to keep DMs in control and players entertained

Don't do the same thing over and over, though because they'll get used to it and it will lose its effect, and it *is* a game. And don't take away their drinks all night long—it's not fun to be thirsty all night.

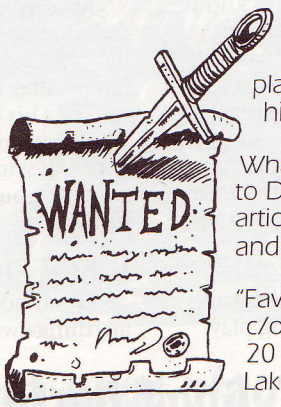
Never Give Them What They Expect

If they think the house is haunted, don't let them see the ghost until they're sure it isn't haunted. If they suspect Mr. X is the murderer, don't let them find incriminating evidence pointing to him until they're defending his innocence. Let them convince themselves of the wrong belief through their own investigation. (Don't do it every time, though. No one likes to be wrong all the time.)

Bring it Back to Haunt Them

Some of the best adventures don't come from a module or a dungeon (no matter how cool it is), but rather from the campaign itself. Play off what has come before in the game.

Bring back old foes, even if they're dead (assuming you're running a fantasy game). Have the bartender from their favorite tavern ask them for help to save his friend, rather than some brand new NPC. Use that basilisk that they could never find to kick off a whole new adventure. If they made a grand vizier mad three sessions ago, have him get his revenge now. Or better yet, if they made him mad three months ago or three *years* ago, have him strike back now. It's great to have players say, "Oh yeah, I remember that...." It not only makes the world seem more real, it makes the PC seem like a real part of it because he does things that have long-term effects.



In coming months, we plan on collecting useful DM hints from industry pros. But what about you? What are your ideas about how to DM? We don't need a whole article, just send your best tips and tricks to:

"Favorite Things"
c/o RPGA
201 Sheridan Springs Rd.
Lake Geneva, WI 53147

Making the Terror Live

by Gary Labrecque

Did the RPGA® coordinator of a convention ever convince you to judge a new system because he needed judges? Maybe you wanted to try judging that system in the first place? When you finally received the tournament (perhaps at the convention) did you wonder what you got yourself into? For many, this becomes a nerve-racking situation.

While I cannot advise you on some systems, I have spent time running and writing many of the RPGA-sanctioned horror systems: Call of Cthulhu, Chill, RAVENLOFT®, and LIVING DEATH™ (although the latter is not considered strictly a horror campaign). In this article, I offer tips on how to make tournaments a little scarier.

Preparation

Preparation is extremely important, no matter what system you are running. You are sunk before you begin if you do not read the module in advance. This is especially true for horror tournaments, where it matters as much how things are done as what is done. You have to know where the scary parts are and how to present them most effectively. I usually read boxed text aloud to myself just to get the feel of how it sounds, to see what parts I should emphasize for the most dramatic results, and to smooth out any rough spots. Some judges play-test tournaments ahead of time with their gaming groups.

Familiarize yourself with spells or special rules used in the tournament. Nothing breaks the mood during play more than the judge spending time looking something up in a rule book. The more you familiarize yourself with the rules ahead of time, the less you will have to worry about them at the table and the more time you will have to play.

Atmosphere Is Everything

At the table, you must build the mood of the tournament. RPGs do not have the luxury of visual special effects like horror movies. Your presentation of the tournament and the players' imaginations are all you have to work with. Change your voice according to the situation: yell, scream, shout, or whisper (if possible). Use sound effects to your advantage. Find something that squeaks like a door; practice pounding the table so that it sounds like the T-rex from Jurassic Park.

Alter your pace as the encounter merits. Go slowly at first to build tension. When a monster jumps out at the PCs, speed things up. Make the players decide their actions quickly; their characters have only a little time to respond. If you do not give players time to think clearly, they will react emotionally and you will have a better chance of scaring them.

Modify your environment, if you can. Play at night, dim the lights, and light the room using candles or oil lamps. Play ominous background music. This is usually not possible during a convention, but works well at home. If you are lucky enough to get a room to yourselves at a convention, go for it!

Subtlety Is Important

Good horror is subtle; try not to give anything away ahead of time. Some judges telegraph when a monster is about to attack the party by their actions and tone of voice. There might be nothing behind the kitchen door, but don't let your players know that. Learn to act as if the monster is lurking behind every door, in every closet.

Never tell the players the name of a monster. If they know it is just a pack of giant rats, they will not be nearly as scared as they would be if you described it to them. Make your descriptions sound sinister and dangerous: talk about the rat's red glowing eyes staring at them in the darkness. If you treat an encounter with giant rats the same way you do when they meet the pack of jackalweres, your group will be just as scared in both encounters.

Keep Players Off Balance

Players should not feel as if they are in control of the situation because uncertainty adds to the atmosphere. There are several tricks you can use occasionally to undermine players' confidence. Have them roll d20s without telling them why for no reason except to unnerve them. Note their rolls, and tell them that nothing seems to have happened yet. If players really need to make a roll during play, do not tell them what they are rolling against. Keep track of players' hit points yourself and only describe their injuries to them. Roll dice and act as if you are taking notes; I keep a large d6 around just for this purpose. Create uncertainty in your descriptions by using words like "seems" and "yet." Say, "The room seems empty," with the emphasis on *seems.*

Confirm actions during tense situa-

Good horror is subtle... There might be nothing

tions. If they say they are going to open the cellar door, repeat what they just said as a question: "You're going to open the cellar door?" Sound doubtful, as if you are trying to make sure they are really doing this. Make it seem that you are trying to cover yourself so that no one can complain after the monster rips them apart. This works every time if you do it the same way no matter what is behind the door. Players cannot help but wonder why you are asking and start worrying.

Do anything you can to get a reaction. Take them aside or pass notes to tell them information only they would know. Physically separate them from the group if they go off on their own. Bang on the table or throw things. Blow a whistle at the table if your tournament is set in London and someone is calling the police. Active judging makes for entertaining play.

Become Attached to the Players Not PCs

Strike a rapport with your players if you can. Talk to them as you are getting ready to start. Find out if anyone is new to the game, and take time to explain the system you are playing. This makes them feel at home at your table and encourages them to participate and ask questions. Encourage role-playing by role-playing even small encounters, letting quiet players find something interesting, asking everyone what they are doing, etc. The more players become involved in the character, the easier it is to scare them. Besides, anyone who sits back and does not participate takes away from everyone else's fun as well as their own.

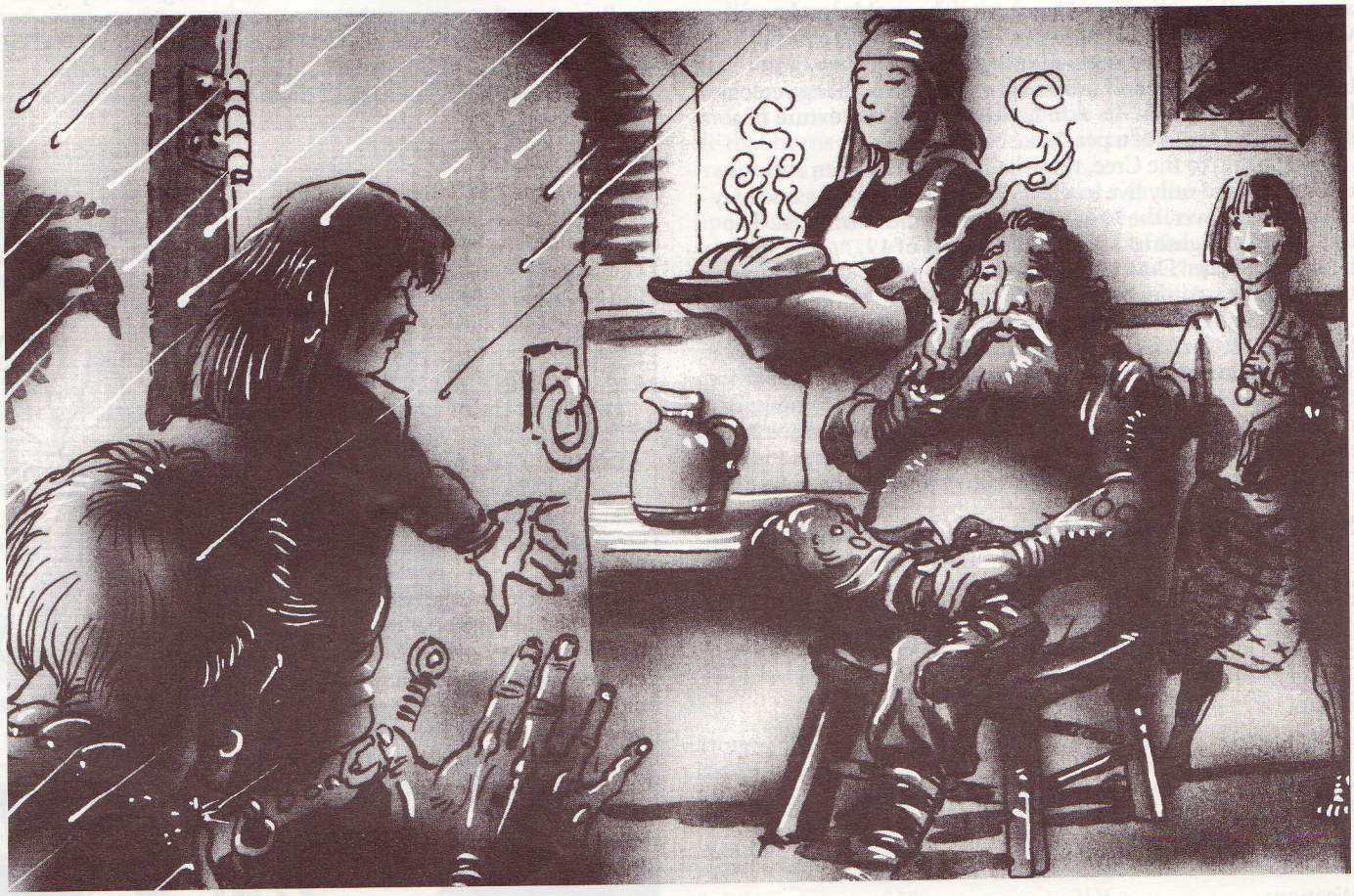
Your attitude towards the PCs should be entirely different. PCs die or are driven mad—it's an unavoidable fact of horror RPGs. Do your best to keep the PCs alive early in the round because it's no fun to die in the first hour or so, but do not feel badly if everyone dies near the end. It does not matter whether the group defeats the menace or not. The ultimate goal is for everyone to have a good time.

Be Prepared For Anything

Most horror scenarios do not channel PCs into one course of action, but allow players to be inventive in dealing with the horror. In my years of judging horror RPGs, I have found players can be VERY inventive. Characters have thrown dead comrades through a gate to hide them from the police. Teenage characters have borrowed a parent's car and driven several hours to Miskatonic University Library just to look something up.

Expect the unexpected. Be ready to respond to what your players choose to do no matter how outrageous. If there is nothing in the tournament that covers their choice, make something up consistent with the module. Remember that the players do not know what is supposed to happen. React as if you expected their actions all along.

Do not worry if all of this seems a little daunting. The most important thing is that everyone, including you, has fun. Judging any system well takes practice. Listen to your players' comments and learn as you go. If you endeavor to make horror scenarios a little scarier, it will pay off. The best compliment you can have is a group of players who are afraid to get on the elevator alone at the end of the evening because of the tournament you just ran. ❑



behind the kitchen door, but don't let your players know that.

MODERN MINIONS OF CTHULHU
PARANORMAL CREATURES OF THE MYTHOS

Anyone reading Fortean literature (named after Charles Hoy Fort, who collected a massive number of reports concerning things and events modern science could not explain) will soon learn that many bizarre creatures have been reported by sane and credible witnesses. Since Call of Cthulhu (CoC) has had a Fortean timeline in its rules at least as far back as the Third Edition (the last boxed set), it seems only right that we translate some of these beasts into CoC stats, weaving them into the Mythos as best we can.

by Gregory Detwiler

MANNEGISHI

Lesser Independent Race

Most often reported in eastern Canada and New England (of course), with an emphasis on Massachusetts, the mannegishi is described in Cree Indian legendry as a small humanoid being some four feet in height, with long, spidery legs, all four of which end in six-fingered hands that literally mold themselves around anything the creature grasps, a short, thin neck, and a watermelon-sized and -shaped head equal in size to its body. The head itself has no nose, mouth, or ears, only a pair of large, glassy, round, and lidless eyes which may change color from orange to green. Its skin has the sandpaper texture of a shark's skin, and is of a peachlike color.

According to the Cree, these beings hide between rocks in the rapids, and only live to play jokes on travelers. As one may imagine, however, the "jokes" may sometimes turn fatal. The last recorded sightings took place in April of 1977, with the being called the "Dover Demon" because of the Massachusetts town it appeared near.

The mannegishi may be summoned, but few do so, and fewer still return from the summonings. Their penchant for strangling those they catch alone (1D6 damage per round; takes a successful STR roll to break free) and their own use of magic make such summonings a hazardous business. (Note: In the STR listings, the number to the right of the slash is for the hands alone, which are specialized for strangling.)

MANNEGISHI, Spindly-limbed Humanoids

Characteristics	Rolls	Averages
STR	1D6/4D6	4/14
CON	2D6	7
SIZ	1D6	3
INT	3D6	11
POW	4D6	14
DEX	5D6	18

Move: 6
Hit Points: 5
Average Damage Bonus: none

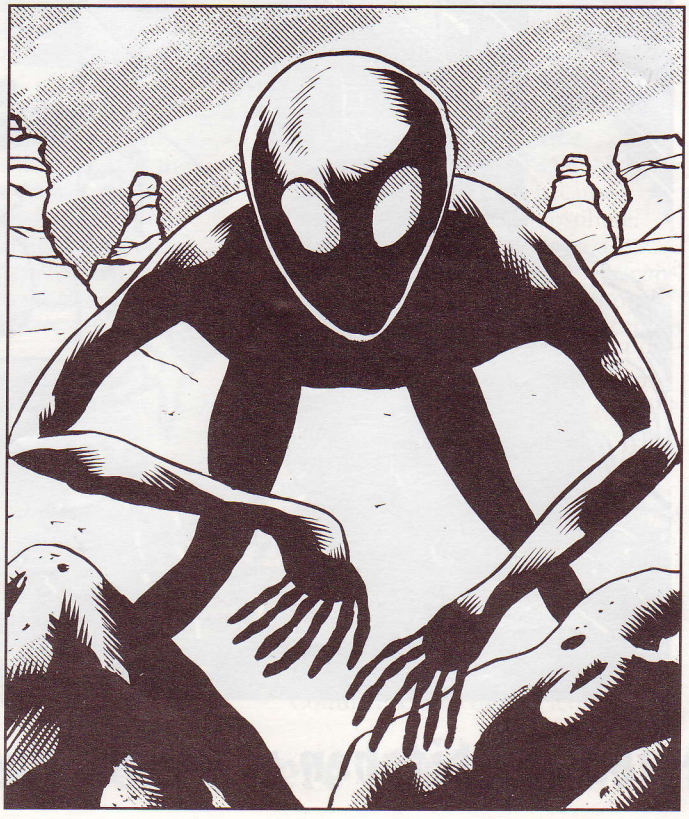
Weapon:

Hand	60%	1D6+STR roll to escape

Armor: The mannegishi has a 3 point hide.

Spells: Mannegishi with a POW of 14 or more generally know at least 1D6 spells. Such spells are typically related to underground life, such as the contacting of underground races or deities. Call Nyogtha, Clutch of Nyogtha, Contact Chthonian, Contact Flying Polyp, Contact Formless Spawn of Tsathhoghua, Contact Ghoul, Contact Serpent People, Contact Shudde M'ell, Contact Tsathogghua, Dampen Light, Deflect Harm, Flesh Ward, Hands of Colubra, and Shrivelling are all popular spells among the mannegishi.

Sanity: It costs 1D8 SAN to behold a mannegishi, but this drops to 1 point if a successful SAN roll is made.



MOTHMAN

Lesser Servitor Race

The mothman is distantly related to the nightgaunts, but with several striking differences. A gray, hulking, humanoid creature up to 10(FM) in height, it has a pair of enormous wings with a 10(FM) span instead of arms. Even more startling is the fact that it has no head, nor any facial features at all save for a large pair of glowing red eyes set in the creature's shoulders. It flies silently, without flapping its wings; the only sound it has ever been heard to make is a loud Eeeep!, like the squeaking of an enormous mouse.

In combat, the mothman employs a telekinetic effect similar to that of the lloigor. Because it has no physical attacks beyond a rather ineffectual beating of wings, however, its telekinesis is far more efficient. Wherever it is, the mothman can create a telekinetic effect with a STR of 1 for every magic point it invests in the effort. The range of this effect is 30 yards. Given the large amount of magic points the average mothman has, this makes these relatively fragile (for Mythos monsters) creatures formidable opponents indeed.

These beings can be found all over the world, but the most infamous save of sightings took place in the community of Point Pleasant, West Virginia, in 1966-67. In the company of UFOs, they haunted the region for 15 months, in a reign of terror that ended on December 15, 1967. On that day, the Silver Bridge, part of a major traffic artery between West Virginia and Ohio, collapsed into a Kanawha River during a major rush hour. Thirty-eight bodies were recovered; several other people wound up missing and presumed dead. The day before, witnesses has observed several men in checkered shirts climbing all over the framework of the bridge. (Strange men in checkered shirts are frequently reported in occult literature.) Cultists? Mythos monsters in human guise? Who knows?

MOTHMAN, Headless Winged Creature

Characteristics	Rolls	Averages
STR	2D6	7
CON	2D6	7
SIZ	4D6	14
INT	3D6	11
POW	4D6	14
DEX	4D6	14

Move: 6/24 flying
Hit Points: 11
Average Damage Bonus: -1D4

Weapon:

Wing Beat	25%	1D4–1D4

Armor: A mothman has a 2 point hide.

Spells: No regular spells are known by any mothman, but with the species' telekinetic powers, such are not necessary.

Sanity: It costs 1D10 SAN to see a mothman, though a successful SAN roll reduces this to 1D4.

JERSEY DEVIL (lesser shantak)

Lesser Servitor Race

The Jersey Devil is a winged monster that has haunted New Jersey and the Philadelphia area just over the border in Pennsylvania as far back as 1735 at least. It has a horse's torso with a long, thin neck, a dragonlike head with the curled horns of a ram, a rat's tail, long, slender, batlike wings, a long, ratlike tail, and four hoofed feet, with the front legs shorter than the rear ones. The creature also has a rough, scaly hide. Its cry is a combination of whistle and squawk, starting on a high and piercing note, and ending in a low, hoarse tone. Contrary to some legends, it does not breathe flames, but it does have an acidic spittle that burns like fire when it comes in contact with flesh (range of five yards).

As someone who makes a successful Cthulhu Mythos roll upon seeing the creature for the first time will realize, the Jersey Devil belongs to a species akin to that of the shantaks. Although these beasts can be summoned and employed as mounts, they are not as popular among occultists as the shantaks themselves for some unknown reason. If a Jersey Devil is encountered by the investigators, it will most likely be a wild specimen roaming free. More common by far in Earth's Dreamlands than in the waking world, Jersey Devils are found in both realms in regions of thick forest.

JERSEY DEVIL, Flying Horned Monster

Characteristics	Rolls	Averages
STR	4D6	14
CON	3D6	11
SIZ	4D6	14
INT	1D6	4
POW	1D6	4
DEX	3D6+3	14

Move: 8/16 flying
Hit Points: 13
Average Damage Bonus: +1D6

Weapon:

Bite	30%	1D6
Spittle	55%	2D6

Armor: 4 point hide. In addition, any electrical attack upon a

lesser shantak will automatically dispel its substance for two hours. After that time, however, its physical body will reform.

Spells: A lessor shantak knows no spells.

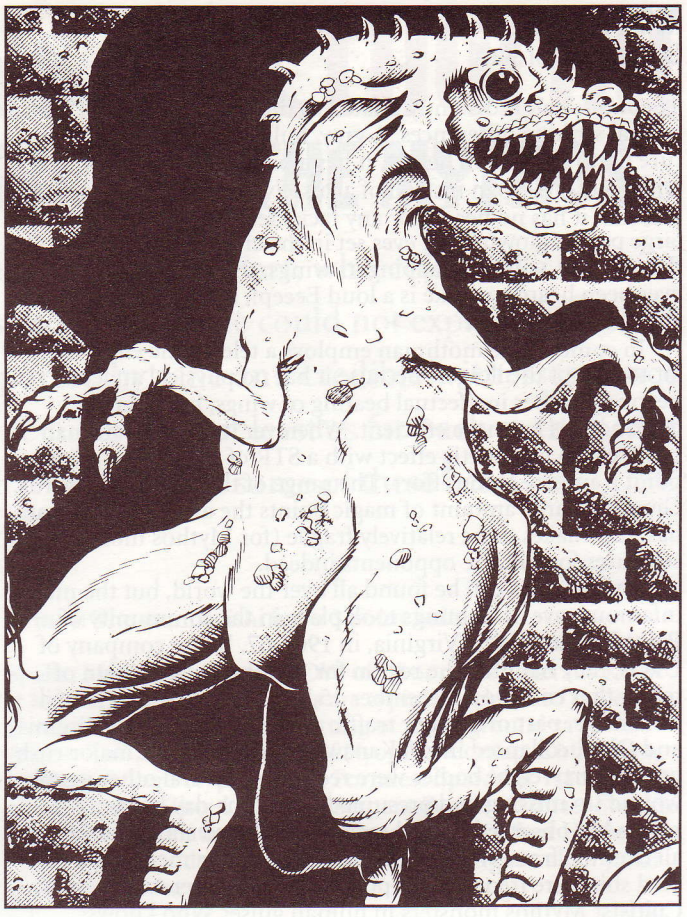
Sanity: Anyone who sees a lesser shantak loses 1D6 points of SAN unless he makes a successful SAN roll, in which case the loss is 0 points.

TRI-POUNCER

Lesser Independent Race

This creature first made itself known to the world on April 25, 1973, outside the home of Henry McDaniel of Enfield, Illinois. Late in the evening, he heard a scratching noise outside his door, opened it, and saw the—thing. It was between four and a half and five feet in height, had three legs in a tripodal arrangement, a pair of short arms protruding from the chest area (like those of a carnivorous dinosaur), and, offsetting its gray skin, a pair of pink eyes as large as flashlights. When McDaniel shot it, he saw no obvious injury (he only had a .22 automatic pistol), but the creature hissed like a wildcat and leaped away, covering 25(FM) per bound. The tracks of two of its six-toed feet were 4(IM) around, while the third was only three and one-quarter inches.

Mythos scholars theorize that this creature comes from some universe where the vertebrates have five limbs instead of four as a common standard. Either that, or the odd-tracked "leg" in the tripod set was really a modified tail. Some think they are related to either the nightgaunts or—because of their large eyes—the byakhee. Reports of these creatures are scarce, but they can apparently show up in any environment.



TRI-POUNCER, Three-legged Leaping Thing

Characteristics	Rolls	Averages
STR	5D6	18
CON	3D6	11
SIZ	4D6	14
INT	1D6	4
POW	1D6	4
DEX	5D6	18

Move: 18
Hit Points: 13
Average Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapon:		
Bite	30%	1D4+1
Claw	20%	1D4+1D4
Kick	35%	1D6+3+1D4

Armor: 4 point hide

Spells: Tri-pouncers know no spells.

Sanity: It costs 1D12 points of SAN to see a tri-pouncer, or 1D4 if a successful SAN roll is made.

REFERENCE

Bord, Janet & Colin; *Alien Animals*; 1980; Stackpole Books.The Bords cover a wide variety of paranormal animals in separate chapters, including Bigfoot, sea serpents, phantom cats and dogs, and winged monsters such as Mothman and the Jersey Devil. In addition to CoC, Beyond the Supernatural and Rifts players as well will be intrigued by discussion of ley lines.

Clark, Jerome & Coleman, Loren;*Creatures of the Outer Edge*; 1978; Warner Books. Clark and Coleman have their own theories of what "alien animals" are all about, and although they do not mention sea serpents like the Bords do, they have expanded coverage of Bigfoot-type monsters (the tri-pouncer is included in Chapter Three) aerial monsters such as Mothman, and the first book coverage of the "Dover Demon" or mannegishi. Later on, Clark and Coleman apparently put out either a book of further research or the old book under a new title, in *Creatures of the Goblin Universe*, which I haven't seen.

Coleman, Loren;*Mysterious America* and *Curious Encounters*; 1983 and 1985, respectively; both books by Faber and Faber. Coleman covers both monsters such as the mannegishi and Jersey Devil (in *Mysterious America*) and all sorts of other weird phenomena and apparitions. In Chapter 18 of *Mysterious America* he covers the "Mad Gasser of Mattoon", which was actually featured in this year's GEN CON® Game Fair Chill, 2nd. Edition event.

Keel, John A.; *The Mothman Prophecies*; 1975 (Saturday Review Press); 1976 (Signet, first paperback printing); 1991 (IllumiNet Press; available from Adventures Unlimited, 303 Main St., P.O. Box 74, Kempton, IL 60946). This is *the* classic account of Mothman's reign of terror, told by the paranormal investigator who covered it. Besides Mothman itself, the story covers UFOs, psychic phenomena, mysterious "people", and just plain nuts in abundance. Any referee in any horror game who wants a fertile source of ideas for unusual encounters and events to hit his players with need look no further than this book.

Vecna Lives! In Ravenloft®

New Domains From the RAVENLOFT® Hardback

by William W. Connors

The Burning Peaks

The newest of Ravenloft's Clusters appeared fully formed from the Mists, having been drawn from the world of Greyhawk. Despite its recent creation, most inhabitants of the Demiplane have heard of the dreadful masters of this realm: Vecna the lich-god and his nemesis, Kas the Destroyer.

The paired domains of the Burning Peaks are closely tied despite their great differences. It is difficult to imagine a less hospitable land than that of Cavitius, the realm of Vecna, the lich-god. His is a region of volcanic ash and perpetual twilight that leeches the life from its inhabitants as it crushes their spirits. On the other side of the Burning Peaks lies the domain of Tovag. In this temperate land, life—and even some slight measure of hope—exists, despite the tyrannical nature of the dreadful overlord who rules it.

The masters of these two realms hated each other in life and carried over this enmity into their undeath. Each constantly struggles to gain power over the other, determined to slay an enemy who always remains hidden on the other side of the Burning Peaks.

Culturally, the people in both realms appear to share common roots. This is hardly surprising since they were drawn from the same land. Travelers who come into these lands, especially those drawn from the City of Greyhawk and the world of Oerth, should realize that the language and customs of these folk are lost in the history of their supposed homeworld. Nowhere on Oerth does anyone speak or understand the language of Cavitius or Tovag.

Cavitius

The land: The tortured land of Cavitius is the westernmost of the two realms that make up the Burning Peaks Cluster. Cavitius is roughly crescent shaped, bordered on the east by the mountain range that gives this cluster its name. On all other sides, Cavitius is bordered by the swirling Mists of Ravenloft.

Night does not exist in Cavitius—or perhaps there is no day. It can be difficult to tell, for the sky is a uniform dark gray in color, and the entire realm exists in a perpetual state of twilight. The vast majority of this realm is a seemingly endless desert of ash spewed from the volcanoes of the Burning Peaks. These emissions give the sky its somber, oppressive color.

Known as the Ashen Wastes, the deserts of Cavitius are anathema to all that lives. Any living creature who travels there begins to die. No healing of injuries or other ailments is possible within the Ashen Wastes, even through magical means. Only within the walls of the Citadel Cavitius can the wounded hope to be restored to health. In addition, each hour that a living creature spends outside of the Citadel reduces him by 1 Hit Die or level. A creature who falls to zero Hit Dice instantly becomes a desert zombie under the control of Vecna (see the RAVENLOFT MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® Appendix III).

At the eastern edge of this domain, where the jagged slopes of the Burning Peaks rise like shark's teeth from the Ashen Waste, life is just as unwelcome. In addition to the deadly properties of the Ashen Wastes, these volcanic mountains are marked by streams of highly acidic water, flowing lava, frequent tremors, avalanches, and other natural perils, which make the battles held there even more dangerous.

The only city in this realm is the skull-shaped Citadel Cavitius. Within this gloomy, somber city dwell nearly ten thousand men and women. Although an occasional demihuman finds his way into this abode of the damned, only humans are native to this domain.

Three flagstone roads reach across the Ashen Wastes, wind their way through passes in the Burning Slopes, and emerge in the domain of Tovag. As these leave the Citadel, they are well constructed and maintained, but over the course of their transit, they gradually become more and more worn and broken. By the time they reach the passes, the white stones turn brown, having been stained with the blood of untold thousands who have died there. Importantly, those who travel on these roads are protected from the life draining effects of the Ashen Wastes. A single step off of them, however, will begin to kill the traveler.

Cultural level: Medieval.

The folk: The people of this domain all live within the confines of Citadel Cavitius. They are a desolate folk, devoid of hope and most emotion. Although they are free-willed, most have had their spirits broken and obey without question any order given them by Vecna or one of his minions. Everyone in this city is a follower of the Maimed Lord. To be otherwise is to invite torture and death.

The law: Vecna maintains order through the agents of his faith. Outsiders, however, have difficulty distinguishing between the Church of the Whispered One and a crushing, tyrannical secret police.

Although Vecna fears no mortal, he is not foolish enough to take chances. This is especially true in light of his unexpected imprisonment. As such, the use of magic within Citadel Cavitius is punishable by death. The only exception to this law, of course, are priests who draw their power from worship of the Maimed God himself.

The closest thing to a constabulary in Cavitius are the Fingers of Vecna. This group of enforcers is technically part of the Church of the Whispered One, though they act more like an organized collection of thugs and bullies.

Native player characters: Characters from Cavitius may be only fighters. No other classes are found here, except for priests of Vecna (who are not suitable for use as player characters). In addition, there are no demihuman natives in this grim land.

The oppressive nature of life here causes a reduction of 4 points from the Charisma score of any native Cavitian. Their exposure to the energy draining effects of the Ashen Wastes, however, has given them a resistance to wounds and injuries which; thus, they use 12-sided Hit Dice rather than the traditional 10-sided Hit Dice of the fighter class.

Personalities of note: Vecna's chief lieutenants are a pair of highly unusual golems (if that is indeed what they are). One is composed wholly of eyes torn from the sockets of criminals, spies, and traitors, and the other is fashioned from hands cut from the arms of thieves, assassins, and charlatans. Known as "the Eye" and "the Hand," these sinister creatures are highly intelligent and unswervingly loyal to their master.

Encounters: Those traveling within the Citadel Cavitius will have the normal sorts of encounters one might associate with a large city. Life in Citadel Cavitius is particularly brutal, however, with the strong taking what they will.

Outside the city, the Ashen Wastes are thick with desert zombies. Other types of unintelligent undead are not uncommon, but it is these so-called lurkers beneath the sand that most people here speak of. These undead never leave the confines of Vecna's domain.

Because this land has no distinct day or night, most creatures can be encountered at any time.

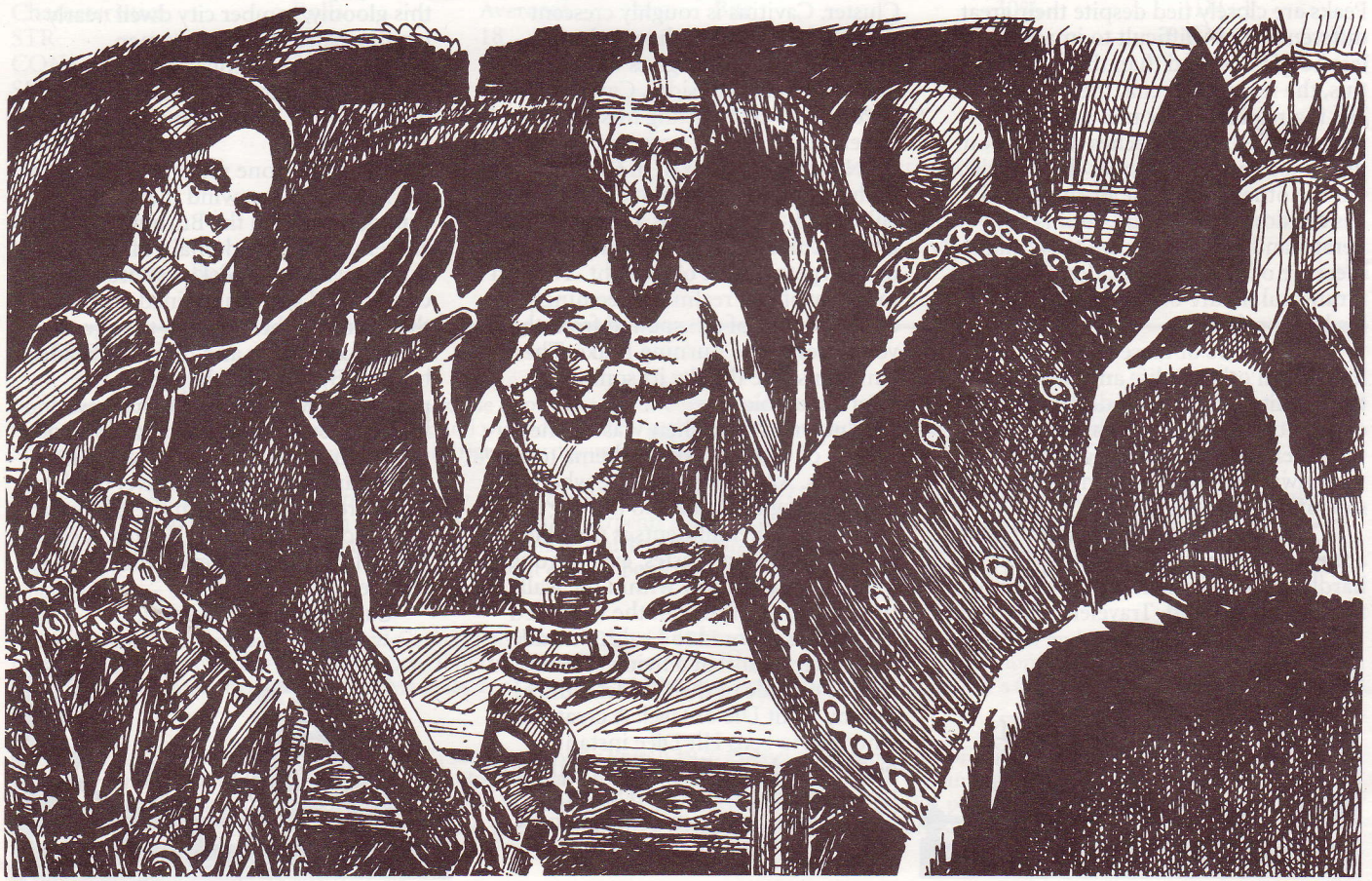
Further reading: The demigod Vecna is featured in the GREYHAWK® Adventures module *Vecna Lives!* (TSR #9309). The artifacts bearing his name (the hand and eye of Vecna) as well as the sword of Kas are presented in The *Book of Artifacts* (TSR #2138).

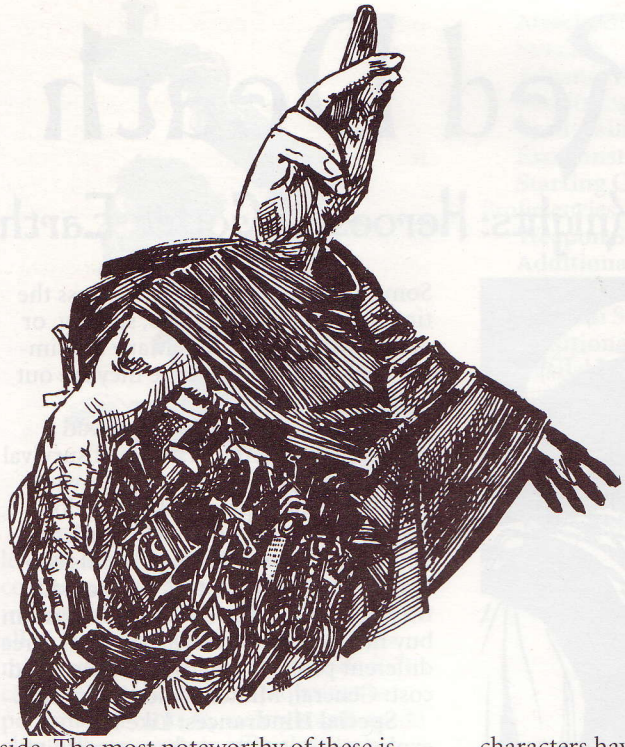
Tovag

The land: This domain is the smaller of two regions which make up the Burning Peaks Cluster. Like its sister domain, Cavitius, it was pulled from the planet Oerth, home of the famed City of Greyhawk. Tovag lies pinned between the churning Mists and the jagged Burning Peaks. Much of the land is covered with light forests of scrub pines and other plants hardy enough to survive in the sulfur-rich soil.

The overlord of Tovag, the vampire Kas, dwells in a great fortress that stands in the northern half of the domain. In the south lies the densely packed city of Tor Gurak and the expanses of farms that supply grain and other crops to the inhabitants.

A number of well-constructed flagstone highways run across the country-





side. The most noteworthy of these is the Karsican Way, which runs between Tor Gorak and the Fortress of Kas. Three lesser roads run to the west, vanishing through passes in the Burning Peaks to emerge in the domain of Cavitius. Despite the fine quality of these roads, they are little used.

Cultural level: Medieval.

The folk: The poor souls who live in Tor Gorak accept their lot in silence. They recognize that theirs is a harsh master and speak of the vampire Kas only in whispers and guarded tones. They know too well that the creature who rules beyond the Burning Peaks is far more terrible than their own lord.

The inhabitants of Tovag tend to have very large families. This is due mostly to the fact that the overlord pays a decent bounty for each child born. Those who live in this domain also seem to age at an accelerated rate. Most reach maturity after about nine years, allowing them to be conscripted into Kas's army sooner than would be possible elsewhere. Any characters who remain in this domain for more than a month begin to age faster as well.

The law: Kas maintains a war-time mentality, forcing his people to live the most meager of existences in order to free up important supplies for his endless war against Vecna. He cares nothing for the people, seeing them only as instruments in his effort to destroy his former master.

Life in Tovag is dominated by routine searches of people and residences, a complete lack of personal liberties, and the crushing heel of a tyrannical police state. The state police, known as the Daggers, are constantly searching for traitors, spies, and criminals. To be sure, the daggers are an efficient group. They have the power to sentence and execute criminals on the spot. Little matters like evidence and actual guilt are seldom as important in the meting out of justice. Indeed, travelers in Tor Gorak are far more likely to run afoul of the so-called law than any criminal.

Native player characters: All allowable character races and classes in Ravenloft (other than the Vistani and half-Vistani races and the gypsy class) are available here.

Due to the accelerated aging caused by this domain, native player characters have actually only lived half as long as their apparent age would indicate. Thus, Tovag natives receive a –1 penalty to their Wisdom score. After the character has been out of the domain for a month, the aging process slows to normal, though this does not negate the Wisdom penalty. Also, the aging penalties (from Table 12 in the *Player's Handbook*) occur in half the normal amount of time.

Life in Tor Gorak is harsh, and those who dwell under the rule of the Daggers learn to avoid the often over vigilant eyes of the law. As such, any native of this realm is assumed to have the ability to hide in shadows like a thief. The character's chance of success begins at 50% and increases by 2% per level to a maximum of 90% at 20th level. If the character is a thief by trade, he begins play with this base (instead of that listed in the character generation section) and may use his discretionary skill points to further increase this ability in addition to the 2% increase received with each level. The maximum chance of success for a thief character is dictated by his class, not the normal 90% limit.

Personalities of note: Apart from the brutal Kas, the most noteworthy individuals in this domain are Tejen the Grim and Vocar the Obedient. Tejen is the master of Kas's state police and acts as the overlord's right hand in all military matters. Tejen, a 15th-level Avenger, has sworn to see the lord of Cavitius destroyed because of wrongs done to his family by followers of the Maimed God. Kas appreciates the loyalty of Tejen but remembers all too well that he held a similar position before turning against Vecna so long ago.

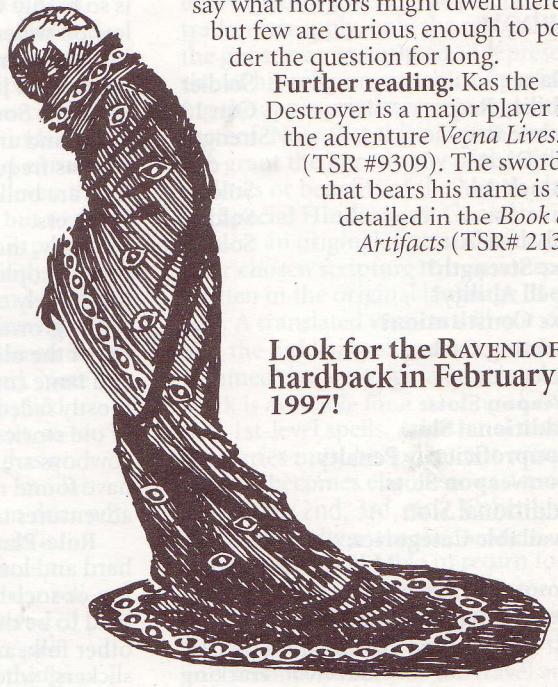
Vocar the Obedient is a 16th-level priest of Vecna who heads a small, secret church devoted to the worship of the Chained God. The activities of this church range from recruiting new members to acting as an insurgent guerrilla force that strikes against the interests of Kas whenever possible. Vocar is the most wanted man in all of Tovag, and the Daggers search constantly for him.

Encounters: In Tor Gorak, the most dangerous encounter is likely to be members of the Daggers charged with keeping order. Since outsiders are likely to stand out against the backdrop of despair and suffering that marks this realm, they will be obvious targets for arrest, torture, and possibly execution.

Outside of the city, Tovag is not a particularly dangerous realm. It has its share of predators, but these are the same as those found in any temperate area of like geography. Wolves, mountain lions, and the occasional viper mark the most dangerous of this land's animals.

Within the Fortress of Kas, however, things are sure to be different. None can say what horrors might dwell there, but few are curious enough to ponder the question for long.

Further reading: Kas the Destroyer is a major player in the adventure *Vecna Lives!* (TSR #9309). The sword that bears his name is fully detailed in the *Book of Artifacts* (TSR# 2138).



Look for the RAVENLOFT hardback in February 1997!

Masque of the Red Death

Victorian Knights: Heroes of Gothic Earth

by Andrew Hauptmann

With the introduction of the Masque of the Red Death campaign expansion for the RAVENLOFT® setting, and the related LIVING DEATH™ tournament campaign from the RPGA®, I've seen many good ideas for new kits that aren't already represented in the kits from *A Guide To Gothic Earth.*

Following are four new kits inspired by characters that I've seen (and created) in recent LIVING DEATH games that I've played and judged, and also by archetypes of 1890s culture and literature. Each kit represents one of the four standard Masque character classes (soldier, tradesman, adept, and mystic), but offers something new that cannot be found within the scope of the standard character creation rules. Following the kits is a description of Arithmology, a new nonweapon proficiency designed for use by gnostic characters.

Ed. note: The following kits are sanctioned for use in LIVING DEATH tournaments. Enjoy!

Cowboy

Class:	Soldier
Ability Req:	Con 13
Prime Req:	Strength
Hit Dice:	d10
Attack As:	Soldier
Save As:	Soldier
Advance As:	Soldier
Exc Strength?	No
Spell Ability?	No
Exc Constitution?	Yes
Starting Cash:	3d6
Proficiencies	
Weapon Slots:	4
Additional Slot:	3
Nonproficiency Penalty:	–2
Nonweapon Slots:	3
Additional Slot:	3
Available Categories:	General, Military, Wilderness
Bonus Proficiency:	Equestrian
Recommended Proficiencies:	Animal Handling, Rope Use, Survival, Tracking

Description: Cowboys are known by many names throughout the world—on the ranch they are called wranglers, in Mexico vaqueros, in South America gauchos—but all are easily identified by their working clothes and equipment. Standard dress includes tight denim trousers and chaps, high leather boots, a kerchief or bandanna, and a broad-brimmed hat or sombrero.

A cowboy's most important asset is his horse, which is his only reliable form of transportation on the range. A horse is so highly valued that a cowboy who is low on water will give it to his horse instead of drinking it himself. Standard equipment includes a lasso (called a lariat in the Southwest United States), knife, and army revolver. Rifles are not used as frequently by cowboys because they are bulkier and less practical than revolvers.

Sadly, the Cattle Boom that drew so many people into the life of a cowboy had largely ended by the mid-1880s, due to the growth of railroads and the closing of the old cattle trails. The glamour and fame cowboys once enjoyed has mostly faded into memory and the stuff of old stories and dime novels. Most cowboys are now ranchers, and the rest have found new roads to travel, and new adventures to seek.

Role-Playing: The cowboy's life is hard and lonely, leaving little time for fun or socializing. As a result, cowboys tend to be direct in their dealings with other folk, and don't care much for "city slickers" who can't hold their own. Some cowboys find hobbies to pass the time, such as playing cards, singing, or even composing poetry. Many are simply bored most of the time they are out on the range.

Special Benefits: Cowboys lead a harsh life, where the first rule of survival is "learn fast or get out." Anyone who can't learn the ropes quickly and do their own work is not invited back for another cattle run. Because of this baptism of fire, cowboys pick up the skills they need very easily. Thus, cowboys can buy nonweapon proficiencies from three different proficiency groups at the listed cost: General, Military, and Wilderness.

Special Hindrances: Like the explorer/scout, the cowboy spends little time socializing or even seeing anyone other than his fellow cowboys. This gives the character a –4 reaction adjustment when dealing with non-cowboys (loyalty modifiers are unaffected).

Because they are so vital to his work, the cowboy must buy proficiency with the following weapons at first level: army revolver, hunting/bowie knife, and lasso. The last weapon proficiency slot may be spent on any weapon the cowboy desires.

Servant

Class:	Tradesman
Ability Req:	Cha 12
Prime Req:	Dexterity
Hit Dice:	d6
Attack As:	Tradesman
Save As:	Tradesman
Advance As:	Tradesman
Exc Strength?	No
Spell Ability?	No
Exc Constitution?	No
Starting Cash:	3d6
Proficiencies	
Weapon Slots:	3
Additional Slot:	4
Nonproficiency Penalty:	–3
Nonweapon Slots	6
Additional Slot:	3
Available Categories:	General, Professional
Bonus Proficiency:	Etiquette
Recommended Proficiencies:	Savoir-Faire, Modern Languages, any Professional

Description: The well-groomed butler, the attentive maid, the uniformed coachman, the matronly lady-in-waiting, the obedient foreign manservant—all of these images and more come to mind when one thinks of those dedicated souls who find employment as personal servants to society's well-to-do elite. Whatever their official title or function, they all share the same purpose, to see to the needs and comforts of their employer and his family.

Role-Playing: Cultured, genteel, prim and proper—all of these describe the ideal servant. Manners and protocol are the highest of virtues, prompt and quality service the loftiest of goals. The needs of the employer (and his guests) are of the highest import, and the servant will see to those needs, even if the employer himself does not recognize them!

This kit works best when another PC is the servant's employer. Any character of noble or wealthy breeding would do, though the ideal PC companion would be the dandy (another kit for tradesman characters).

Special Benefits: A good servant attempts to maintain a calm and proper demeanor no matter what happens around him. The unflappable character gains a +2 bonus on all saving throws against fear effects, whether magical or non-magical in nature. This bonus naturally applies to all Fear Checks.

Special Hindrances: An unfortunate side effect of the servant's attitude is a natural aversion to objects, people, and situations that might be considered improper, rude, or vulgar. This gives the servant a –2 penalty on all Horror Checks.

Gnostic

Class:	Adept
Ability Req:	Wis 14
Prime Req:	Intelligence
Hit Dice:	d4
Attack As:	Adept
Save As:	Adept
Advance As:	Adept
Exc Strength?	No
Spell Ability?	As Adept
Exc Constitution?	N
Starting Cash:	2d6

Proficiencies

Weapon Slots:	2
Additional Slot:	3
Nonproficiency Penalty:	-4
Weapon Slots:	5
Additional Slot:	3
Available Categories:	General, Arcane
Bonus Proficiency:	Religion
Recommended Proficiencies:	Forbidden Lore, Academician, Ancient Religion, History, Prognostication, Arithmology

Description: The gnostic is an adept who derives his knowledge of wizardry from holy books and texts of his religion. By finding hidden messages and deciphering codes found between the lines of prayers and holy scriptures, the gnostic uncovers a potent source of magic. Whether the gnostic finds connections between himself and a true divinity cannot be proven by even the most noted metaphysicians, but to the gnostic the spells he receives is proof enough of the power of his faith.

The practice of gnosticism is a quest for divine truths and revelations about the spiritual connections between divinity, the universe, and mankind. Note that the gnosticism can be applied to any religion with a written text, so any holy book could each be used as a source for gnostic study with similar results. The particular religion does not matter, only the adept's faith in it.

Role-Playing: The gnostic is a devout follower of his particular religion, and can even become a vested parson of his sect. His work is to seek holiness and goodness in all things under heaven and earth, as well as in the holy book. Most gnostics firmly believe in the inherent goodness of the human spirit, and in the eventual triumph of good over evil. These gnostics strive to help others realize their spiritual potential, even if they follow a different religion or sect.

It should be noted that some gnostics cultivate the worship of evil entities, often through the writings of ancient, dead religions, or active evil cults. Such "deities" may include evil gods of dead cultures, such as the Egyptian god Set or the Norse god Loki, or perhaps forgotten demons or otherworldly evil entities that were old when the world was young and were banished from the mortal plane before recorded history. These evil gnostics are a force to be reckoned with, and make excellent NPC opponents..

Special Benefits: The power of the gnostic's faith allows him to cast spells with greater potency. All spellcasting effects are resolved as if the caster were one level higher than his actual level. Thus a 2nd-level gnostic casts his spells with the effectiveness of a 3rd-level adept. This ability does not grant the extra spells available to a higher-level adept, only the enhanced effects for spells cast. Thus a 1st-level adept still starts play with only one memorized spell per day (or two if the adept is a specialist in a particular school of magic), but can cast that spell with the potency of a 2nd-level adept.

By spending an extra nonweapon proficiency slot on Religion, the gnostic can become a vested servant of his religion (priest, rabbi, monk, etc.). Not all gnostics do this, nor is it required for the gnostic kit. None of the Special Benefits or Hindrances of the parson kit for tradesmen apply, only the recognition of the gnostic as an authorized representative of his religion, capable of performing the appropriate services and rituals thereof. Note that this ordainment does not grant the gnostic any of the special abilities or benefits of the Mystic class.

Special Hindrances: Gnostics require an original, untranslated copy of their chosen scripture to acquire spells, written in the original language of that text. A translated version will not contain the hidden spellcraft secrets. It is assumed that an original, untranslated work is available for a starting character's 1st-level spells. Additional commentaries must be sought out every time he becomes eligible to cast a new spell level (2nd, 3rd, etc.). Other gnostics will usually make the location of the required texts available in return for a service or holy pilgrimage of some sort, usually involving some form of sacrifice, fasting, and prayer. There are also time and monetary costs for the travel and

equipment necessary to find these additional religious texts. The details are left to the DM, but an amount not less than $500 and one month per spell level is recommended.

Because the gnostic derives his knowledge of magic from the writings of his own religion, spells derived from other sources, including those of other religions, are more difficult to learn. The gnostic suffers a –2 penalty to all Spellcraft checks made to learn such spells (other uses of the Spellcraft proficiency do not incur the –2 penalty). This penalty does not apply to spells acquired when gaining a new experience level, which are assumed to be researched from the gnostic's own holy books, only to spells acquired from other sources while adventuring. It is the DM's prerogative to decide whether a spell found during an adventure is from a religious source, and if so from which religion.

Dilettante

Class:	Mystic
Ability Req:	Cha 12
Prime Req:	Wisdom
Hit Dice:	d8
Attack As:	Mystic
Save As:	Mystic
Advance As:	Soldier
Exc Strength?	No
Spell Ability?	As Mystic
Exc Constitution?	No
Starting Cash:	6d6

Proficiencies

Weapon Slots:	2
Additional Slot:	5
Nonproficiency Penalty:	–4
Nonweapon Slots:	5
Additional Slot:	3
Available Categories:	General, Arcane
Bonus Proficiency:	Savoir-Faire
Recommended Proficiencies:	Religion, Ancient Religion, Forbidden Lore

Description: When the spiritualist movement spread through Gothic Earth in the late 1800s, a few wealthy, upper crust curiosity-seekers turned this idle fascination into a full-fledged lifestyle. Unlike most, these amateur dabblers into magic occasionally found something more than a fake fortune-telling or staged haunting. They discovered the powers of mysticism and the spirit world. These well-to-do dabblers, called dilettantes, achieved what takes most mystics a lifetime to learn. Quite by accident, they have discovered true magic!

NOTE: While mystic dilettantes seem similar to the adept's charlatan kit, there are important conceptual differences between the two. Charlatans, looking for fancy incantations to spice up their acts, were surprised to discover they could cast real magic, whereas Dilettantes always expected to find real magic through dabbling.

Role-Playing: Dilettantes are thrill-seekers who look for new sensations and experiences through magical rituals and events. They visit any place or event that proclaims itself to be magical in nature, including pagan rituals, seances, fortune-readings, haunted sites, and anything else possibly related to the spirit world and mysticism. While their approach is eclectic, unprofessional, and haphazard, dilettantes sometimes manage to find true magic amidst the fakery and stage magic, and to enjoy the experience regardless of its authenticity.

Special Benefits: Used to dealing with strange and unusual people, the dilettante gains Savoir-Faire as a bonus nonweapon proficiency.

Exposure to a broad base of mystic practices has its advantages. Every other experience level starting with 1st, a dilettante can choose to research two spheres instead of one. When reaching the next level of experience, the dilettante gains access to both spheres. The character can study for minor or major access in either or both studied spheres, but cannot gain major access to a sphere unless minor access was gained in the previous experience level.

A dilettante cannot focus studies to gain both minor and major access to the same sphere in one level. For example, a dilettante cannot use this benefit to gain both minor and major access for the healing sphere in one level. He could gain minor access in one experience level, and then major access the following level.

Special Hindrances: Because of their sporadic and informal studies, dilettantes take longer than the norm to achieve new experience levels. They advance using the soldier's experience table rather than the mystic's.

New Arcane Proficiency

Arithmology

(2 slots/Int/–2)

Arithmology is the practice of finding the numerical values of letters, words, and names, and using those values in magical equations to discover truths about the subject. Names, even assumed names, carry power, and knowing the values of these names grants power over the named individual.

In game terms, using Arithmology to find the value of a subject's name (real or given) gives the subject a –2 penalty on all saving throws against the spellcaster's magic. If the true name of an outer planes creature (such as a fiend) is known and calculated, this penalty becomes –4. Of course, a fiend's true name is a closely guarded secret. Its discovery may be as dangerous as an encounter with the fiend itself!

Arithmology has two requirements aside from knowledge of the craft: materials and time. Materials are easily acquired: paper and writing utensils, and perhaps a book of tables and an abacus.

The time factor can be more prohibitive. When using the Arithmology proficiency, the player must add the numerological value of the subject's name (where A=1, B=2, etc.). The sum of the letters is the total number of rounds the calculation will take.

For instance, Benjamin Harrison (U.S. President from 1889-1893) has a numerical value of 170 (add it up and see). This translates to 2 hours, 50 minutes for proficiency use. NOTE: Any *player* mathematical error results in failure for the entire proficiency check.

Only part of a name, or an alias, provides appropriate negative modifiers to the proficiency check:

Alias	–10
Last name only	–8
One missing name	–4

In any event, its user must be free from distractions, making Arithmology impossible to use in combat. Practitioners should discover necessary names and equations before confronting an enemy.

Because Arithmology taps into the magical energies of the world, tainted long ago by the Red Death, any use of this proficiency requires a Powers Check. This check is made at the end of the required calculation time.

If the character also possesses the Prognostication proficiency, Arithmology may be used with numerology to divine the future. A character who knows both proficiencies gains a +2 bonus when using Prognostication. ❑

Does the world look dark?

Do horror, fear, and night *loom* on all sides?

Step out of it all. Step into...

The Halls of the Morning Light

A Temple of Lathander, god of spring and dawn, for RAVENS BLUFF™ or your own campaign

by Bobby Nichols

Sitting atop Ravens Bluff's highest hill, the Halls of the Morning Light command a view of the city. It is especially appropriate that this is the temple of Lathander, god of the spring and the dawn, as this temple faces eastward so that worshippers receive the full glory of Lathander's gift each morning.

Lathander occupies a place of prominence among the powers of the Civic Religion because he also presides over births, renewals, and new beginnings, all of which are very dear to the citizens of Ravens Bluff. The priests take their duties to the city, which are several, very seriously.

First, and most importantly, the priests tend to the sick and dying. Death is just a new beginning, according to Lathandran teaching, so many come to have their pain eased as they cross over into death. In addition, most women who give birth in the city are tended by Lathandran priests. Expectant and hopeful mothers are always welcome in the Halls of the Morning Light as the blessed of Lathander. Even animals about to give birth are blessed (though not at the temple) because many farmers venerate the Morning Lord.

The church also believes that any new undertaking should be blessed by their god, so they spend time walking throughout the city, bringing blessing. Since most citizens do not see the need for every little thing they do to be blessed, they rarely visit the temple except for large undertakings, such as marriage, the building of a house, or the start of a long journey. Adventurers are among the most negligent, according to the priests, and the temple's representative on the Clerical Circle has been working to ensure that any adventurers hired by the city, or its representatives, go to the Halls of Morning Light to receive blessing. So far, his efforts have met with little success.

The church of Lathander rarely finds itself at odds with other civic temples, as the tenets state, "Because Dawn comes each day without fail, the Morning Lord can be relied upon to resolve any differences between his children." There are sore points, however. One of the biggest standing arguments is with the Tower of Holy Revelry, the Lliira temple, over who should preside over the celebration of the return of spring. Another long-standing disagreement is maintained by the followers of Helm, who believe that their temple should be on the high hill, since their god is the patron of vigilance.

Holy Days

The most important day of the year in the temple's view, is Greengrass, the return of spring. On this day, the temples of Lathander and Lliira join to hold a week-long celebration (though the Lathandran priests preside over the ceremonies). This festival is known for its unchecked revelry featuring minstrels, religious plays, and games of chance.

During the summer, the Halls host formal holy days at Midsummer and at summer solstice, which marks the beginning of summer. These are more solemn days and involve much liturgy and reverence.

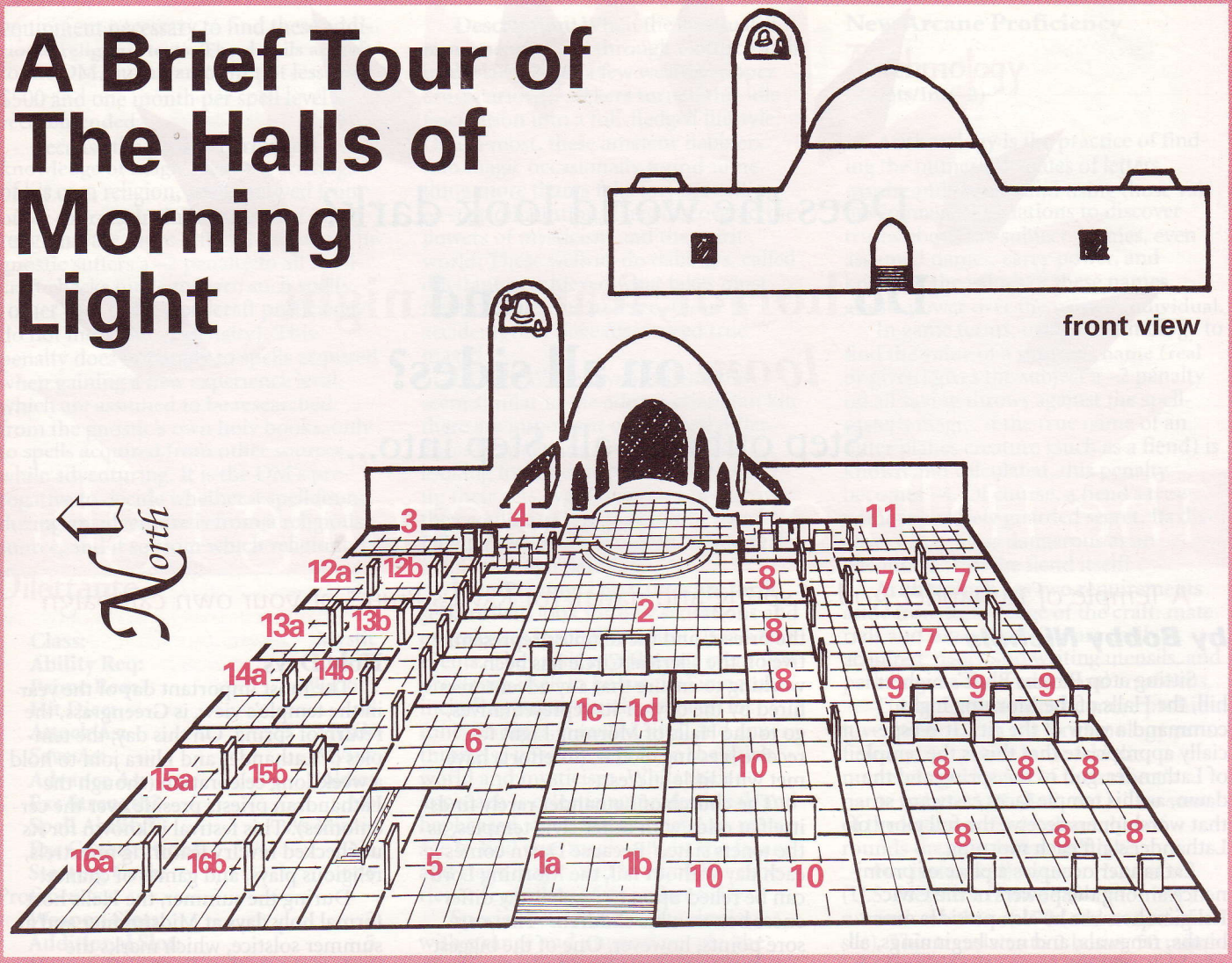
The winter solstice is a day of mourning for Lathander's priests. The priests fast for a week and then come into the temple humbly dressed. This is a time of renewing vows to Lathander and reflection on his blessing in the previous year. Priests often inscribe scrolls with descriptions of new events in their lives and the names of people met in the last year. These scrolls are offered to Lathander in gratitude.

Relarn Dayspring

High Morninglord
Chief Prelate of the Clerical Circle
Human Male 13th Level Specialty Priest
Age:50
Height:5′ 9″
Weight:185 lbs
Hair: dark brown/graying
Eyes: brown

Morninglord Relarn Dayspring has been serving as high priest of this temple for almost eight years. He carries himself with confidence and vigor, knowing from personal experience how

A Brief Tour of The Halls of Morning Light



The Halls of the Morning Light are known throughout the Inner Sea region for the statue of Lathander that graces the main sanctuary. This exquisite white marble piece is without blemish, and portrays Lathander as a young man in simple robes covered in gold leaf. He smiles down on the pews where the congregation sits.The statue is situated at the eastern end of the sanctuary. It is a marvel of sculpture that has yet to be duplicated. The walls behind the statue have *glassee* and *permanency* spells cast upon them so that they let the light of the sun into the sanctuary.

The temple complex is lit mostly by skylights and windows. Internal areas have continual light globes mounted on the walls, so that light always fills the temple.

As worshippers approach the sanctuary, they pass through a hallway filled with murals that remind them of the power and benevolence of Lathander. The murals portray Lathander standing behind a mother with newborn child (1a), Lathander striding through a flock of sheep in the springtime (1b), Lathander holding aloft the sun in his hands (1c), and Lathander touching a fallen warrior and raising him back to life (1d).

The public sanctuary (2) is the largest room in the complex. The floor slopes gently downward toward the statue and altar in the eastern part of the room. The room has a flat ceiling, so the height seems to increase as one travels toward the statue. Wall hangings decorate the sides of the sanctuary, showing the tenets and purpose of the religion: marriage, birth, blessings on new undertakings, and healing. The predominant colors of the hangings are rose, pink, and gold. Hanging above the sanctuary is a large rose-colored disk. This disk has been enchanted to glow with the light of the dawn at the verbal command of the temple's senior priests in case of a cloudy day).

Three wide steps lead up to the main altar area where a moveable altar rests. Followers offer gifts to the god by laying them at the statue's feet and touching the statue's hands briefly.

To the left of the main sanctuary area are the offices and quarters for the priests that live at the temple. Morninglord Relarn Dayspring, the chief priest of the Halls of Morning Light, has a room here (12). Allara Dawnmaiden and Vethic Dawnshield, the senior priests, also have rooms in this area (13 &14 respectively). Each set of rooms is divided in two, an office and a private chamber. The priests have a private chapel in this area as well (3), with a smaller statue and altar area. The kitchen (5), dining hall (6), and the chambers for the junior priests also lie on this side of the temple (15 & 16).

The bell tower is accessed by the stairs next to the private chapel (4). A junior priest rings the bell at dawn to call worshippers to service.

The vestment and storage areas are located to the right of the main sanctuary. The infirmary is also here (7), along with classrooms (8), guest quarters (9), and a small library (10).

The Halls of the Morning Light are open from dawn until dusk. At night, the doors are locked to everyone except those needing healing. As the dawn breaks, the priests emerge singing the praises of the new day and the glory of the sun's return.

powerful Lathander's help can be. Relarn was once an adventuring priest, but quit when he lost a hand to some Zhentarim agents. He could have lost much more, but Lathander's dawn came in a burst of radiance which surprised his enemies and allowed his escape. He has since had his hand regenerated, and though he no longer adventures, he still gives advice to adventurers whenever possible.

Allara Dawnmaiden

Female Gold half-elf 10th Level Specialty Priest
Age: 52 (looks 30)
Height:5′ 4″
Weight:109 lbs
Hair: bright copper
Eyes: golden

Allara is the priest in charge of the infirmary, and the one to whom request for healing or midwife services come. She takes her duties very seriously. She can usually be found in the infirmary area day and night, even though the temple is not open at night. She has often been chided by Relarn for neglecting her own health in the interest of her patients, and this is usually true.

Allara's exotic looks and caring attitude make her attractive to a large number of men, both within the temple and without. She is oblivious to their charms, however, unless they are occupying a bed in her infirmary. She has no interest in marriage, as she knows she has been called by Lathander to this ministry. Allara tends to be gruff and quiet when people engage her in conversation, but when comforting someone she transforms into a caring and outgoing woman. When she is not busy with the sick, she spends time in the private chapel praying, and sometimes walks through the city to dispense comfort and healing to those who will not come up to the Halls.

Vethic Dawnshield

Human Male 8th Level Cleric
Age: 35
Height:6′ 1″
Weight:190 lbs.
Hair: blond
Eyes: clear blue

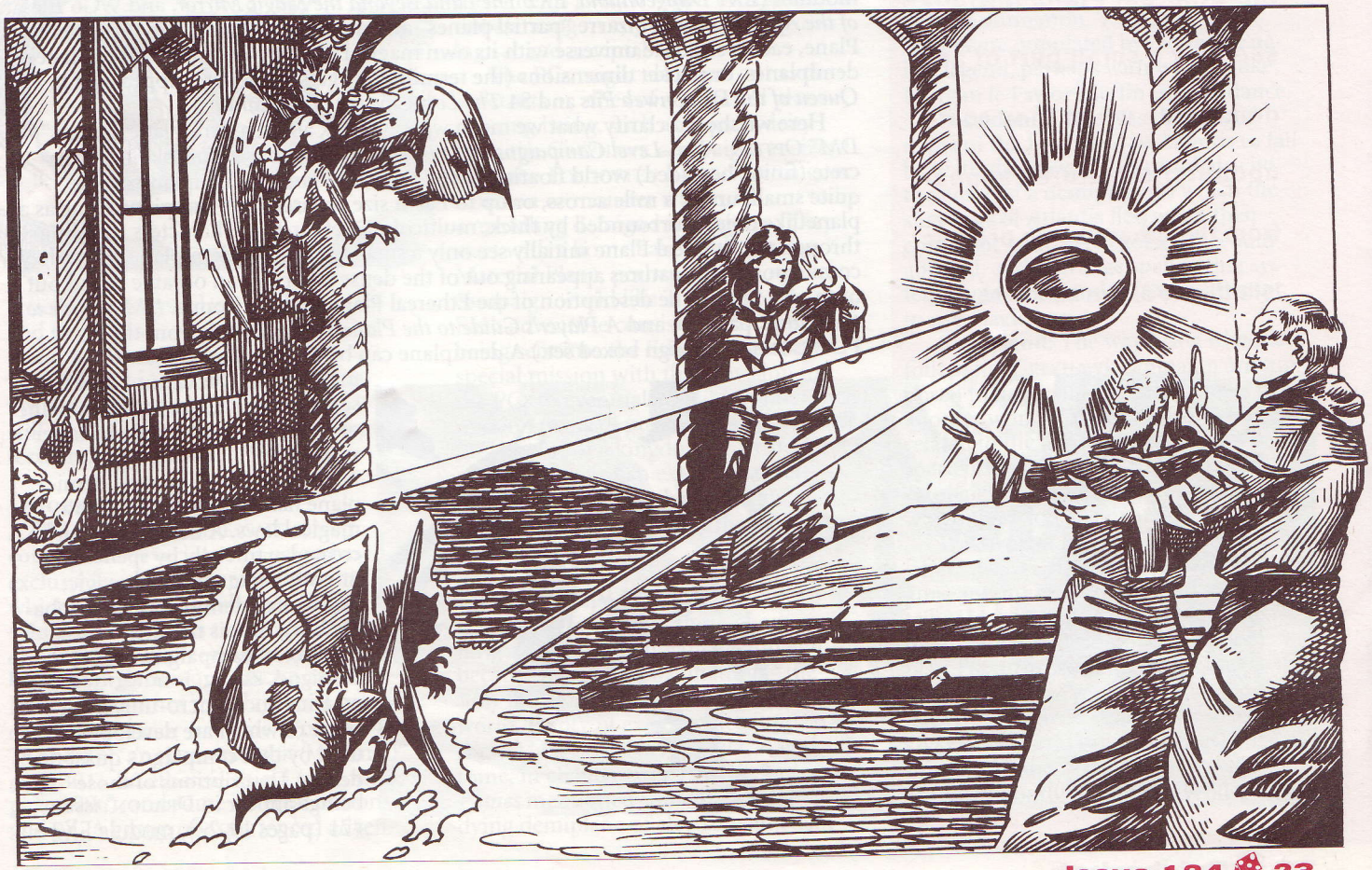
Vethic is Relarn's right hand, the second in command of the Halls of the Morning Light. His duties include assigning work, teaching the acolytes, and insuring that the temple's duties to the city are maintained. He sits on the Clerical Circle when Relarn is indisposed, and handles all matters that do not require Relarn's personal attention. Needless to say, these duties keep him busy from dawn to dusk.

As a young man, Vethic trained for an order of paladins dedicated to Lathander, but felt the call to be a more direct servant of his god. His parents were disappointed; his decision went against three generations of tradition. They have not spoken to him since. Vethic left his homeland, Sembia, and adventured for several years. After surviving a troll ambush, he and his companions came to the Halls of the Morning Light for assistance. When Vethic entered the temple for the first time, he felt he had found his home.

Vethic does not adventure any more, but encourages all priests to spend several years doing so in preparation for finding their own place in Lathander's service.

Other priests include Larrend Orcsbane (hm P5), Malloca Silvereyes (hf P5), and Sierra Dawnsdaughter (hf P3). They are assigned to the main sanctuary, and one of them is always there between dawn and dusk. Irilica (hf P1) and David Starwatcher (hm P1) are new junior priests. They are assigned to laborious jobs, including cleaning the holy areas.

The temple also supports 15 followers who serve the priests. These men and women wash, cook, clean, assist in the infirmary, and do whatever else needs to be done.



Island Campaigns

Part 3: Speaking (demi-) planely

A World of Your Own

by Roger E. Moore

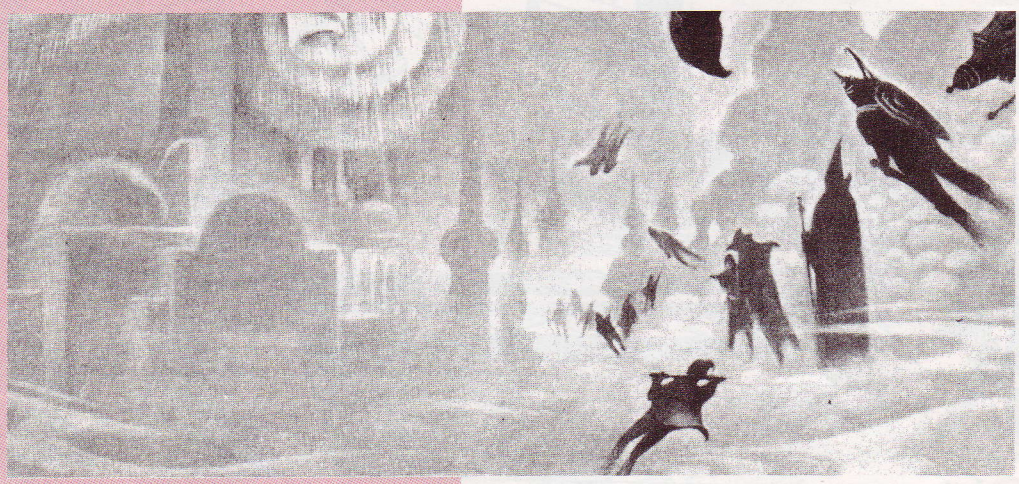
A demiplane is a finite, bounded world floating in the Ethereal Plane. A demiplane can be under a mile across, or up to Earth size or larger. Characters traveling through the Ethereal Plane initially see only a small part of any demiplane when they come upon it; its features appear from the ether like an oceanic island out of the sea mist.

We've looked into the theory and practice of island campaigns for the AD&D® game. It's time now to look at a variation on the theme that carries it to an extreme: demiplane campaigns.

Ethereal thoughts

Long before the AD&D 2nd Edition PLANESCAPE® boxed set or even the original AD&D *Manual of the Planes* volume came out, a series of short adventure modules for the GREYHAWK® campaign introduced the concept of island demiplanes. These modules (EX1 *Dungeonland*, EX2 *The Land Beyond the Magic Mirror*, and WG6 *Isle of the Ape*) described bizarre "partial planes" and demiplanes floating in the Ethereal Plane, each a separate universe with its own magical and physical laws. Other planes, demiplanes, or pocket dimensions (the terminology gets loose here) appear in Q1 *Queen of the Demonweb Pits* and S4 *The Lost Caverns of Tsojcanth*.

Here we should clarify what we mean when we talk about a demiplane. In the *DM™ OPTION: High-Level Campaigns*, pages 44-45, we see that a demiplane is a discrete (finite, bounded) world floating in the Ethereal Plane. A demiplane can be quite small, under a mile across, or up to Earth size or larger. We can picture one as a planetlike object surrounded by thick, multicolored ether-fog. Characters traveling through the Ethereal Plane initially see only a small part of any demiplane when they come upon it, its features appearing out of the dense ether like an oceanic island out of the sea mist. (The description of the Ethereal Plane is taken from *A DM™ Guide to the Planes*, page 23, and *A Player's Guide to the Planes*, page 6, both from the PLANESCAPE campaign boxed set.) A demiplane can be of any shape; those in the modules EX1, EX2, and WG6 seem to be flat, like the Demiplane of Dread. (What's on their undersides, then?)

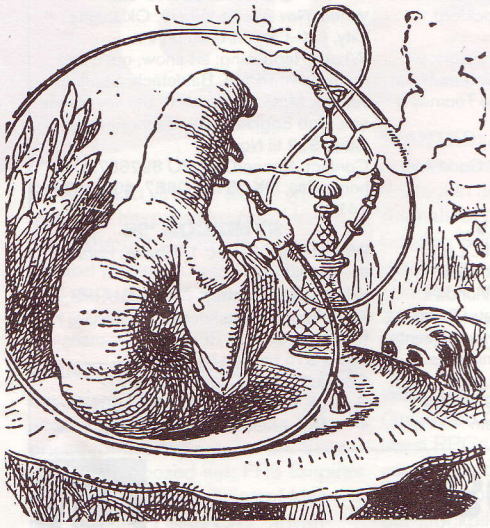


As noted earlier, each demiplane has its own physical and magical laws. A demiplane can be created artificially by spellcasters or gods using powerful magic; most small demiplanes are probably born in this manner. The GREYHAWK campaign's mad demigod, Zagyg, is notorious for creating such micro-universes, some of which are developed and used by that campaign's quasi-deities. Descriptions of those beings appear in DRAGON® issue #71 (pages 19-22), module EX2

(page 8), and the 1983 WORLD OF GREYHAWK® boxed set.

"Created" demiplanes are almost certain to reflect particular themes or concepts, often in complex and many-layered form. Particular alterations in certain spells or spell-like powers encountered on such demiplanes should reinforce these themes. The "Alice" partial plane (we'll call it a demiplane) of EX1 and EX2 is a good example of this, but even better is the RAVENLOFT® campaign's Demiplane of Dread (a.k.a. Ravenloft), which is grounded in Gothic horror. This demiplane's theme is greatly reinforced by its alterations to spells and local monsters.

The most famous demiplane other than Ravenloft is certainly the Demiplane of Shadow, which has long been referenced in AD&D game literature. For details on this demiplane, see the *Manual of the Planes* (page 21); DUNGEON® issue #35 (pages 8-24, the adventure "Twilight's Last Gleaming"); DRAGON issue #213 (pages 22-30, the



article "The Demiplane of Shadow"); and the PLANESCAPE boxed set's *A DM Guide to the Planes* (page 23). The Demiplane of Shadow seems to have been created naturally, but its own laws still reflect its themes of twilight, mystery, and borderlands.

Doors to Demiplanes

A DM using the PLANESCAPE set-up could create a variant campaign based exclusively in the Ethereal Plane, in which PCs use magical devices, spells, vehicles, or psionics to navigate from one strange demi-region to another. A look through the four ENCYCLOPEDIA MAGICA™ volumes reveals several types of ethereal armor (volume 1, pages 74-75 and 82), an ethereal cloak (volume 1, page 301), an ethereal shield (volume 3, page 1096), and some ethereal potions and oil. A group of experienced adventures in an Ethereal Plane campaign could start off using such devices to travel from demiplane to demiplane. Instead of boarding a ship and sailing off on an adventure, the PCs instead don their ethereal armor or whatever, then fly off (fade out?) together to their goal, perhaps linking arms or ropes if lacking a true vehicle.

Imagine a demiplane where dwarven prospectors hunt for gold, centaur tribes in war paint gallop across the plains, and the deer and the antelope play.

The existence and gathering of such devices begs for a campaign background to make their presence logical. Ethereal-travel devices might be supplied by an organization seeking to explore the various demiplanes. For instance, the PCs could be members of a kingdom's special military force fighting a plane-crossing army of fiends. The PCs gain their items from a common armory or win them for themselves. Their missions would be very specific: explore a demiplane and report back on all activity there; hunt for an enemy base and destroy it; capture war prisoners or recapture escaped ones; recover a stolen item; etc. With a campaign like this, the existence and use of many ethereal-travel items (which might be regarded as unbalancing in any other campaign) is logical and acceptable.

The PCs might also start out as the assistants or allies of a powerful plane-crossing being, such as a quasi-deity from the GREYHAWK campaign, a wizard from the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting, or a person or monster who turns out to be a meddling demigod in disguise. They start with a home base on the Prime Material Plane, perhaps from a regular campaign world like Toril or Oerth. Each adventure consists of the PCs being sent into the Ethereal Plane on a special mission with the provision for the PCs to eventually establish their own mission plans in pursuit of a larger goal: the defense of a kingdom or world, the establishment of an extraplanar settlement or fortress, or the gathering of knowledge and power for the PC's own personal use.

Demi-Samples

It is very appealing to think about running an island-demiplanes campaign, because the DM's imagination is the only limit on designing each miniature world. Plenty of exciting ideas appear in the *DM OPTION: High-Level Campaigns* tome, in chapter two. The *Manual of the Planes* mentioned something about a dying demiplane of electromagnetism—hmmm. Elements of a demiplane can be borrowed from almost any setting, especially an isolated island or town. Flip through back issues of DUNGEON Adventures and see if something clicks, or look at some of the worlds appearing in SPELLJAMMER® materials.

It is also helpful to look at other published examples of demiplanes or pocket dimensions (discrete worlds attached by magical gates to another, larger world). The DRAGONLANCE® modules DLA1 *Dragon Dawn* and DLS4 *Wild Elves* feature elf-inhabited pocket dimensions, and the Kingdom of Caer Sidi and Labyrinth of Arachne from module Q1 are especially interesting to study. Consider, too, these possibilities:

Avalon: Avalon is the magical island where King Arthur's body lies in suspended animation. This could be a demiplane populated by faerie of English legend, perhaps with wizards like Morgan le Fay or Merlin in attendance.

Poseidonis: This was the alleged name of the last island of Atlantis to fall beneath the waves. This could also be the name of a demiplane to which the survivors of Atlantis fled when their continent sank. Prehistoric life would abound, and a strange spellcasting system could confound PCs who attempt to use magic here.

Gypsyland: The wayfaring Rhennee folk of the GREYHAWK campaign are supposed to have come to the Flanaess from another world. Could they somehow be related to the gypsylike Aperusa of wildspace or the Vistani of the RAVENLOFT campaign? Is there a demiplane from which these folk originated?

Westworld: Imagine a demiplane where dwarven prospectors with shotguns and mules hunt for gold, centaur tribes in war paint gallop across the plains, and the deer and the antelope play. Firearms work here, and magic might not be very powerful. Perhaps Zagyg or Murlynd (one of the GREYHAWK world's quasi-deities) created this demiplane.

Next month: a leap into Wildspace. ❑

Conventions

Featuring Network Sanctioned Tournaments

ATCON III
When: Oct 3–6 **Where:** Austin, TX
What's Happening: 6LC, 1LJ, 1LD, Dark Sun, Champions, WoD, GURPS, Marvel Superheroes, more. Clash of the Titans Win ticket to ATSea '97!
Cost: $15 until Aug 15; $25 at the door
Contact: John Paul Carney c/o GOAT, PO 3116, Austin, TX 78764-3116; 512/443-4251

KULCON V
When: Oct 25–27 **Where:** Wichita KS –The Broadview, 400 W. Douglas
What's Happening: Highlander state championship, sci-fi Saturday with Star Trek guest, Michael Dorn.
Cost: $17 adv or $22 at the door
Contact: John Whitmer 8165 E Central #1002, Wichita, KS 67206. 316/636-4048. www.kars.com/kulcon/

ORK CON '96
When: Nov 1-3 **Where:** Corpus Christi, TX–at the Howard Johnson Airport Hotel
What's Happening: Masquerade Ball, LARP, still looking for GMs & referees for all games! Pre-regs staying in hotel get in free.
Cost: $10 for the weekend, $5 one day
Contact: 512/814-2806

GARDEN STATE GAMESFAIRE
When: Nov 21–24 **Where:** Cranbury, NJ–at the Holiday Inn–Center Point
What's Happening: RPGA events including Living City, Boardgames, CCGs, LARP, and Miniatures events
Cost: $15 adv or $20 at the door
Contact: Andrew Dawson, 470 Ironstone Dr., Boyerstown, PA, 19512. 610/367-4857; asmpd@fast.net

KNIGHT GAMES '96
When: Oct 11–13 **Where:** Brooklyn NY –held at The Berkeley Carroll School
What's Happening: RPGA Network Games including 3 Living City. All convention profit s go to Camp Friendship.
Cost: $15 adv or $18 at the door
Contact: Knights of the Empire,PO3041, Brooklyn NY 11202; dsamuels@aol.com

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CORPSE CON III
When: Nov 1-3 **Where:** Schweinfurt, Germany–Panorama Hotel
What's Happening: AD&D German Championship, Dragon Dice, Magic Tourneys. Guests: Larry Elmore, Lester Smith, Ash Arnett, Brom, Jeff Grubb
Cost: $18 for the weekend, $7 one day
Contact: Robert Moore, Ruckertstr. 15, D-97421 Schweinfurt, Germany

SHAUNCON XIII
When: Nov 22–24 **Where:** Kansas City MO–Holiday Inn South
What's Happening: Living City, Living Jungle, Living Death, CoC, Shadowrun, Star Wars, Warhammer 40K/Fantasy, Vampire, M:tG, Highlander, more!
Contact: RPGKC, PO 7457, Kansas City, MO, 64116-0157, 816/455-5020. ShaunCon@aol.com

SIBCON 96
When: Oct 26 **Where:** Butler, PA –Days Inn Conference Center
What's Happening: RPGA events including Living City and benefit, Boardgames, Miniatures, free-from role-playing, and more
Cost: $5 adv or $7 at the door
Contact: send SASE to Circle of Swords, PO 2126, Butler, PA 16003

GAMMA CON
When: Oct 26–27 **Where:** Texarkana TX –held at the Four Points by Sheraton
What's Happening: AD&D game events; art show and auction; dealer's room; costume ball and contest
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Contact: Outpost Productions, 503 Courthouse Ave., New Boston, TX 75570; 903/628-6298

ROCK-CON XXIV GAME FAIR
When: Nov 9-10 **Where:** Rockford, IL –Rockford Lutheran HS
What's Happening: RPGA events, 2 Living City, 6th Annual Megainternational Empire Builder Championship Tourney & SA games auction
Cost: $5 for one or both days
Contact: M. Schneider 1147 Good Ave, Park Ridge, IL 60068

SOONERCON 12
When: Nov 22–24 Where: Oklahoma City, OK–Clarion/Comfort Inn
What's Happening: art show, open and tournament RPGA, Battletech, Starfleet Battles, M:tG, guests: Kim Stanley Robinson, Bob Eggleton, David Lee Anderson.
Cost: $22 til Nov 5
Contact: SoonerCon, PO 892687, Oklahoma City, OK 73189-2687. 405/769-4417

TOTALLY TUBULAR CON IV
When: Oct 18–20 **Where:** Fullerton CA
What's Happening: More like a large gaming party than a con, features RPGA Network games including first-run Living City and three-round round-robin events.
Cost: $25 until Oct 4; $30 at the door
Contact: Totally Tubular Con, PO 18791, Anaheim Hills, CA 92871-8791; PartDragon@aol.com

CONLINE XXIII
When: Oct 26–27
Where: TSR Online RoundTable, Genie
What's Happening: RPGA Network sanctioned tournaments: Living City, Living Death™, Call of Cthulhu, other AD&D events, Trivia, guest speakers, and more!
Contact: KNIGHT$@genie.com

TROPICON XV
When: Nov 15–17 **Where:** Ft. Lauderdale, FL–Doubletree Guest Suite
What's Happening: South Florida's largest SF/gaming con. Guests: David Gerrold, Peter David. RPGA tournaments, GURPS, Magic, Vampire, Miniatures
Cost: $23 adv or $28 at the door
Contact: George Peterson 954/524-1274. sfsfs@scifi.squawk.com

SYNDICON '96
When: Nov 29–Dec 1 **Where:** Portage, IN–Ramada Inn
What's Happening: AD&D, GURPS, Killer, World of Darkness, Arena PC v. PC M:tG, comics, RPGA events, more.
Cost: $15 pre-reg by Oct 15
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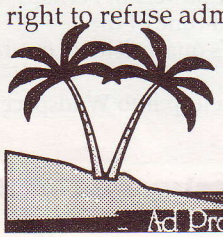

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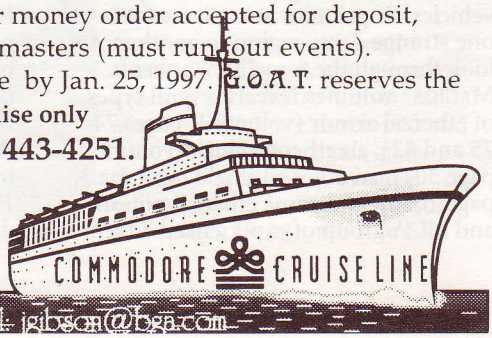

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FOR SALE: Magic:the Gathering cards, the D&D basic set (1991 ed.) and some TSR cards. All in good condition at reasonable prices. Please send a long SASE for prices, terms, and information to: Sam Sampier, PO 435, Cleveland, UT 84518. Advance thanks to those that write!

WANTED: SPELLFIRE Chase Cards. DRAGONLANCE: 3(2)-4-5-6(2)-8-15; FORGOTTEN REALMS: 10-13-15-16-17-18-19-20; Artifacts: 4-6(2)-7-8-10-19; Powers: 8(2)-16; Underdark: 4-7-8-22-24; Runes &

***LIVING CITY* PLAYERS:** Would priests or worshipers of Eilistraee, the goddess of the good drow, please contact me? My character, Rebekkah Darklyte, is trying to establish a temple of Eilistraee in Ravens Bluff. The government has informed me that in order to establish this temple, a minimum of five (5) priests and thirty (30) worshipers are required. I have acquired a suitable property, but need to demonstrate to the authorities that there is sufficient interest. Donations to defray cost of construction are welcome, but not necessary. Please send your name, RPGA #, character name and class to: Ed Gibson 2300 El Cid Drive Dayton, OH 45431-2627

THE DRAGONS DEN currently seeks new members from around the country for our RPG club! We are new and want to expand. We have interest in all RPGs and CCGs. For more info, call David, 219/818-1016. If interested in buying or selling AD&D or Spellfire, call same.

CLUB INFO WANTED: I maintain the Internet-based North American Gaming Club List, and want to expand our RPGA Network info. The NAGCL is posted monthly to newsgroups and echoed to AOL and Cserve. Currently covers 54 states and provinces, 250+ clubs. For copy or to submit info: e-mail multigen@multigenre.com or http://www.multigenre.com/NAGCL.html No fees involved!

Jeff's summer con review

Cool thing #12 about working for TSR, Inc.: It's your job to go to conventions in the summer. Every two or three weeks this summer I went some place to be TSR's boy. It was fun, but hectic. I got to meet a whole bunch of members, talk to people about what they want to see in the Network and the Newszine, and lost enough DRAGON DICE™ demo games to be able to throw a game on command.

Origins

Over July fourth weekend, I went to Origins in Columbus, Ohio. As it turns out, Columbus has the third largest July 4th fireworks display in the country. So unexpectedly, we got a little moment to participate in the great American tradition of watching things blow up.

I was there with Monte & Sue Cook, who are both wonderful people. Although he is now a spiffy PLANESCAPE® game designer, Monte used to be the line editor for the Champions RPG, so I asked him all my geeky fan questions about Champions all weekend.

Origins was a great show. I did demos of DRAGON DICE 'til I lost my voice, and met several fine upstanding RPGA members including, but not limited to, **Dan Donnelly**, **George Aber**, **Mark Jindra**, **Kevin Rau, Troy "Old Man" Daniels**, **Frank Gerkins**, and **Justin** whose last name I can't remember, but you never sent sent me art samples, boy!

I met and hung out with **Richard "the dead guy" Dansky**, developer for Wraith: the Oblivion. He's an extremely cool guy. All in all, Origins was a way positive experience, spent with people I really enjoyed. It's a keeper if I can get back next year.

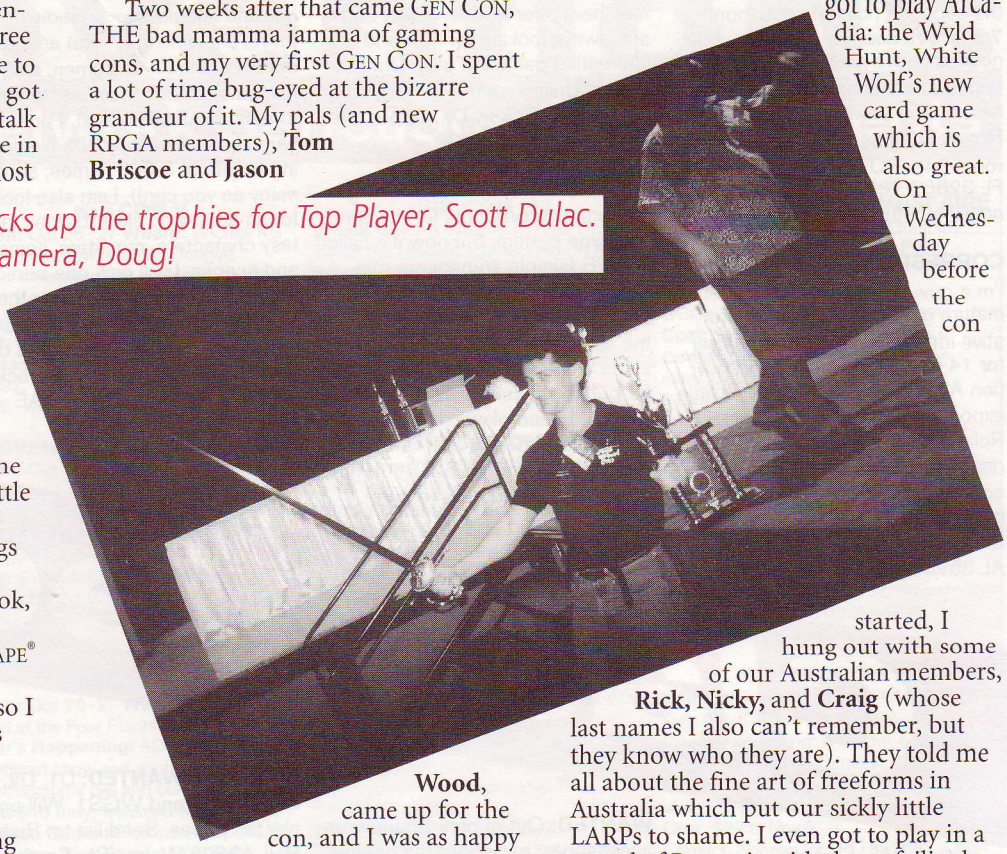
Editor's Day

About three weeks after that, I went to Interplay's Editor's Day in California. It's not technically a con, but I'll count it anyway. I was overwhelmed, hanging out with computer programmers and editors from big-name computer game magazines, the kinds that all look like they were laid out by crazed chimps.

Everyone was cool, though, and I got to sample several TSR licensed games such as BLOOD & MAGIC™ (real-time strategy), a PLANESCAPE setting game still in the works, and the DRAGON DICE computer game which should be out in March (but then again, it might not).

GEN CON® Game Fair

Two weeks after that came GEN CON, THE bad mamma jamma of gaming cons, and my very first GEN CON. I spent a lot of time bug-eyed at the bizarre grandeur of it. My pals (and new RPGA members), **Tom Briscoe** and **Jason Wood**, came up for the con, and I was as happy as a very happy person to see them.



Doug Smith picks up the trophies for Top Player, Scott Dulac. Smirk for the camera, Doug!

Though I was working, I was often too agog to do more than shoo the ubiquitous Magic: the Gathering players out of the walkway. Man, that thing's big. If you've never been, go.

I was on the panel of a couple of seminars, and sold RPGA sweat shirts because the arena was cold as a meat locker. I got a copy of the new Star Wars hardback RPG, which looks great, and got to play Arcadia: the Wyld Hunt, White Wolf's new card game which is also great. On Wednesday before the con started, I hung out with some of our Australian members, **Rick, Nicky,** and **Craig** (whose last names I also can't remember, but they know who they are). They told me all about the fine art of freeforms in Australia which put our sickly little LARPs to shame. I even got to play in a round of Paranoia with the unfailingly entertaining **Don Bingle** as judge. Jason took first place in that round. Go, Jason!

Gateway

Over Labor Day weekend I went back to California for Gateway in L.A. I met **Jeff Albanese** there, did demos of even more DRAGON DICE games, and hung out with **Agnes Thompson**, **Eugene Luster**, and a cast of thousands. I also met **Steve Hardinger** briefly, and several other people whose names I again can't remember, but in case you're reading this, Hi, I remember you, just not your names! Finally, I need to insert the words "cool" and "great" into this paragraph to meet my quota for overusing positive adjectives.

ROBERT'S SUMMER CON REVIEW

I stayed in the office and worked.

This year's AD&D® Open winning team stands proud with plaques, staves, and loot.

convention follies

how I spent my summer vacation, '96

BenCon

I should warn you about Denver's new DIA airport—it's huge! You'd better arrive at least an hour before take-off—just to make it to the gate on time.

All of this, however, did not stop me from having one of the best convention experiences ever at Ben Con, the Rocky Mountain Benefit Gamer's Association all-benefit convention in Denver, Colorado. The RMBGA staff, including members **Ken Richart** (looking dapper in black tie and tails), **Don and Linda Bingle, Robin Hartwig, Cheryl Llewellyn, Tim White,** and **Joy Watkins**, put on a first-class show with games galore, an excellent dealer's room, great guests, and the focal point of the convention, an auction rivaling any I've ever seen. Some of the items sold were a LIVING CITY Vorpal Sword +3 (there can be only one), dinner with all the guests of honor (including **Ed Greenwood**), and the opportunity to be the model for a Magic card!

We had an extraordinarily good time, played games 'til we dropped, and contributed more than $13,000 for Gateway Battered Women's Shelter and Freedom Service Dogs, Inc. Not bad for a two-year-old convention.

Dragon•Con

This is not a gaming con per se, but is still probably one of the largest summer gaming events one can attend. If you share gaming interest with a fascination for rare and wonderful comic books, you'd be foolish to miss this event.

I'm not going to say that this gaming event is established or anything, but gaming coordinators **David Cody** and **Mark Liberman** both received 10-year service awards from the convention chairs this year. This kind of tenure translates to (seemingly) effortless use of time and space, and maximum gaming fun and excitement. Okay, so we had to start a couple games while waiting for the elevators—but the games rocked!

Sherrie Miller, John Richardson, Dan Donnelly, George Aber, and **Glenn Smith** are just a few people who made contributions to the con's total success. Sherrie and John marshaled players out so efficiently, we are looking at shamelessly imitating their system at next year's WINTER FANTASY™ show.

Dragon•Con is the must-see event for anyone who lives for Vampire LARP, LIVING CITY, or life in the Atlanta Underground. Next year promises to be even bigger and better.

DexCon 5

Con Coordinator **Vinny Salzillo** welcomed us to the Somerset Doubletree Hotel in plenty of time to catch every minute of this action-packed convention. Vinnie likes to mix the ridiculous events with the sublime!

Ray Delgado and **Gail Reese** led a huge team of Network volunteers including **Susan Lee, "Gentleman" John A.T. Vaccaro, David Kelly, David Samuels, Linda Baldwin**, and so many others whose names elude my addled pate. There were lots of others who made this show great, because a convention as successful and enjoyable as DexCon feeds on the enthusiasm of willing, smiling minions.

DexCon is the only con I've ever attended where food was a featured guest! DexCon volunteers and judges were forced to consume large quantities of fruit, popcorn, sandwiches, stew, soft drinks, chili, nachos, and bagels... plus 10,000 pixie stix!

I've said it before—DexCon (literally) serves those who serve its attendees.

GEN CON® Game Fair

This year's Game Fair event was a lot of fun for me (a lot of work, too). Network contractors **Cheryl Frech** and Dan Donnelly labored long, planning the event diligently. Network staff members Robert Wiese, Jeff Quick, and I slaved for weeks before the con, and hundreds of willing volunteers and judges slaved for 5 days during the con. And all that slaving paid off.

Cheryl's HQ staff masterfully handled over 850 scoring packets, and **Don Weatherbee's** IS staff entered them with nary a hitch. All that information is tough to process efficiently, and I must say Don and Cheryl made it all look easy. Kudos to all those who helped in HQ especially **Carol Clarkson, Tammy "the Rock" Sampson, Therese Baker** (and family), and **Rocco "Mr. Cool" Pisto**. Special MVP honors to **Tom "the Doorman" Fortunato** and **Jennie "Miss Congeniality" Wright** who managed the Network HQ front door, and sent lpeople away with a smile on their face. Another special mention: Knights of the Empire President David Samuels; I don't think I could choose a more talented, dedicated, unassuming, self-sacrificing, and caring individual. He's probably embarrassed that I'm singling him out, but I want the Network to know how much we appreciate him.

Special thanks to **Willi Burger** who stepped in at a late minute to help with marshal planning (and making some tough but correct calls onsite), **David Baker** who stepped in at the last minute to help Willi facilitate marshaling activities, and John "He's Everywhere" Vaccaro for working his way through marshal schedules and reports. A hefty thanks also go to **John Hinkle**, who helped our AD&D Open staff (**Larry Hull** and **Dave Decker**) put out a huge number of tables. Coordinators help all of our 300 judges, and while space prevents me from mentioning them all here, they are all appreciated.

Dan Donnelly was responsible for helping Network members enjoy themselves on Saturday, working with (new fiance!) **Barb Petilli** and dozens of Dan's Henchmen to run the largest LIVING CITY Interactive ever! Special guests Ed "Elminster" Greenwood, **Jim "faux O'Kane" Ward, Larry "Carrague" Smith**, and **Julie "Amber Lynn" Mazurek** deserve high praise for their performances as well. The miniatures event was also a rousing success, and **Will Sampson, Mark Jindra,** and **Angelos Kaldis** were instrumental for helping us make it so. (For more information about how the battle came out, read this month's Trumpeter.)

For RPGA® Network Pinnacle event winners and charity haircuts, read the NEWScene on page 5!

Sherrie Miller and **Joey Masden** made Network history, running the first ever "Masquerade of the Red Death" event, based on our LIVING DEATH campaign setting. Numerous obstacles got thrown in their way, but they overcame each one, created a wholly different kind of interactive event, and came out smelling like a White Rose.

All in all, we ran a record number of game tables at the Game Fair, and sold a record number of Network memberships. I think we all had a record good time, too!

FREAKONOMICON

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO CONVENTION LIFE

(Best taken with a grain of salt and a spoonful of sugar)

BY TOM BRISCOE

	NAME & ALIAS	DESCRIPTION	KNOWN BEHAVIORS	MATING HABITS	TRUE NATURE	UNSOLICITED ADVICE
	CLASSIC CON GUY alias "Plumber Butt"	Balding, Bearded, Beer belly, wardrobe of tight black t-shirts	Religious attendance to all cons within 2,000 miles	None	Have secretly organized to take over the world	Chicks dig personal hygiene.
	CON DIVA alias "Yes, Mistress"	Bigger & louder than anyone else	Always "in charge," Life of the con suite party	Devours male after mating	Earthly incarnation of the Goddess Venus	None. She won't listen anyway.
	THOSE DAMN KIDS alias "brats", "punks", or "hey you"	Short & in increasingly annoying numbers	Getting in the way, shoplifting Magic cards	Sneaking peeks at "Betty Page" books	Grows up to be Classic Con Guy	Go outside.
	NECRONERDS alias "vampire wannabe"	More pale and hip than you losers	Looks morose. Pierces body. Talks morose. Hangs on. Talks about looking morose.	Questionable. Mass inbreeding, Codependency.	Tomorrow's Yuppies	Don't take a nap. Someone might bury you.
	CHAINMAIL BIKINI GODDESS alias "Look! A Girl!"	Nearly naked female who doesn't mind uncomfortable swimwear	Jiggles distractingly	Not with you	Celibate Exhibitionist	Get out of my dreams, get into my car
	KLINGONS alias "Skin Rash"	Disturbing dedication to worn out scifi motif	Posing for photos, shouting (only when drunk)	Impossible in full costume	Classic Con Guy	Friends don't let friends dress Klingon.
Image withheld to avoid royalty fees	TIRED SCIFI ACTOR alias "Shatner"	Still riding gravy train from cancelled series	Signing autographs. Hawking glossy photos.	Occasionally signs a fan's breasts	Egomaniacal hack	Retire.
	MEDIEVAL MAVEN alias "Queen for a con day"	Polyester period clothing, shoulder mounted dragon	Acts regal. Looks frilly. Spoils her cats.	Desperately sets psychological traps	Aspires to draw unicorns for a living	You must return to the mundane world on Monday
	OVERBEARING EXHIBITOR alias "Loudmouth"	Classic Con Guy gone bad	Pushing merchandise on the weak	Only what money can buy	Profoundly believes he is the center of the universe	Death is too good for you.

The Ravens Bluff Trumpeter

Editor-in-Chief: Fred Faber
City News: Clio Hesperin
Society Editor: Jacinth Moonspring

ARMY VICTORIOUS!

BRILLIANT SALLY DEFEATS 60,000

An approaching force estimated at over 60,000 was roundly defeated by a large contingent of the city's forces under High Priest of Tempus Carlos deVentura outside of Mossbridges last month.

Field General Lord Charles Blacktree refused to take the army into battle, claiming that city could be best defended "behind our stout walls." Warmaster deVentura disagreed, accusing Blacktree of "typical sniveling cowardice," and offered to take the field.

After an all-night meeting of the Council of Lords, it was decided to allow Warmaster deVentura command of the larger sally force, while leaving Blacktree in command of the smaller garrison defending force.

In response, Blacktree offered his resignation, citing the Council's apparent lack of confidence in his strategic decisions. Cooler heads prevailed, however, as the Council refused his resignation.

The sally force met the invaders at Kindle Creek just outside of Mossbridges. While allied Procampan and dwarven mercenary forces pinned down the enemy's infantry on the creek bank, Ravens Bluff's elite cavalry and infantry units swept behind the right flank, and rolled the opponent up, defeating him in detail. An enemy reserve column received the same treatment.

Wine flowed like rivers as the victorious column returned to a welcoming Ravens Bluff shortly after. Acting Mayor Arvin Kothonos made a speech congratulating the brave veterans, saying, "Rarely have we profited so much from valiant, aggressive action. The war has entered a new phase; the phase in which we, not our opponent, dictate action."

Reserve units are asked to stay mobilized until the recent minor breech in the city walls is repaired.Front-line units are asked to stay on full alert.

The staff and readership of the Trumpeter adds our congratulations to the acclaim of the heroes of Mossbridges.

ZENO ACCUSED OF MURDER

Magical item trader Zeno has been arrested by city watch officials as a prime suspect in the grisly death of shop owner Navarre last tenday.

The bludgeoning death of Navarre left many citizens shaken, as rumors spread about the battered condition of the shop owner's body when found by morning customers. Law enforcement officials say that the bald assailant used a smooth blunt object, like the ball from a paddle board or a small flail to smash his employer scores of times.

Chief Constable Rolf "Sunny" Sunriver says there is no cause for alarm.

"We've got the villain in custody. We've been watching this unsavory fellow for months now. Several citizens have complained about being gouged in magic item trades by Zeno."

Officials believe that Navarre confronted Zeno with overcharging customers. Zeno then allegedly murdered his employer.

Officials confiscated the remaining inventory from the now defunct trading shop. The magic trader was buried in a small closed-casket ceremony yesterday.

GARRISON REPELS PROBING FORCE

After deploying the city's field army, garrison troops successfully resisted a small assault force on the city walls.

In a cowardly maneuver, the enemy force, estimated at less than 400, breeched the city's walls in seventeen places under cover of darkness. Field General Lord Charles Blacktree's force suffered minor casualties while dispersing the disorganized rabble. Acting Mayor Arvin Kothonos downplayed the incident, saying that the walls would be repaired in a matter of tendays.

SOCIETY NEWS

by Jacinth Moonspring

Things were as lively as could be at the Knights' Council meeting to discuss the war effort, when much to everyone's surprise, Golden Rooster **Lorien Keltree Darkarrow** (played by Dan Donnelly of GA) fell to the floor in the middle of the meeting.

The high priestess of Selune (played by Rita Rivera-Wyers of IL) was quickly summoned and found a knife in Lorien's back. Meanwhile, with the unknown enemy mounting a new offensive, the gates of the city were swarming once again with activity. The vast majority of the celebration had me running around between the gates to learn if we were winning (which we weren't) and to see if anyone had come closer to solving the murder of Sir Lorien (which they hadn't). Early suspicions fell on the new Thayan Ambassador, a comely woman known only as **Mirinda** (played by Beth Parry of OH), but that was later squelched by reliable sources with inside information.

All ended well, though. The gates of the city held, and the plot behind the murder of Sir Lorien was exposed. It seems that some of the higher ups in the Golden Roosters have become upset at the swashbuckler's way of presenting their order. This reporter doesn't yet have all the facts, I promise to get to the bottom of it all.

As for Sir Lorien, well, he is up and walking around. Let our walls hold stronger a little while longer! Tah-tah!

Society column written by Wayne S. Melnick of FL. If you have printworthy news to share, contact Wayne c/o RPGA® Network or directly by e-mail at: Cateyes01@aol.com

NOTES FROM HQ

The Survey Says...

At the GEN CON® Game Fair this year, Network HQ surveyed players of the LIVING CITY™ Exclusive game about the direction of the campaign and the current war plotline. We got a fair response (thanks to those who responded).

We asked two open questions. **The first was: "My suggestion for further plotlines is..."** Here is a sample of responses, culled from the many we received. (Comments in parenthesis are from the staff.)

- A strange land rises from the sea that needs to be explored
- Anything for non-combatants
- City overthrown from within
- Covert take-over attempt by Zhentil Keep or Thay
- Divine battle for the rights to Ravens Bluff
- Election perils, political conflicts, mayoral elections (a couple of votes, pun intended)
- Fewer dealings with city officials and nobles, more dealings with merchants
- Fewer water adventures
- Invasion or subversion by were-creatures
- Large-scale prison break in all three prisons
- Lose war, PCs as resistance fighters
- Lower city vs. upper city conflicts
- Merchant wars
- Missions of espionage, intrigue, and subterfuge
- More feudal plot lines
- More water adventures
- Natural disaster—fire, tornado, or earthquake
- Ocean armies from around the sea making contact with city
- Political vs religious infighting
- Purge the city of undead
- Religious conflicts or holy wars
- Splinter groups and fanatics
- Toss a mountain seed on Ravens Bluff and start all over (there were several votes for starting over, each involving a different method of destroying the city)
- Underdark adventures (several votes)
- Win the war with great loss, then rebuild (quite a few votes)

The second question was: "If I could have one thing added to the campaign, it would be..." The answers below are a representative sample of the useful or interesting ones we received.

- A lich
- A Thieves Guild
- Adventures which allow for roleplaying (many votes)
- Bring Chemcheaux back (several votes, but don't hold your breath)
- Chances for PCs to get involved in city politics or secret societies
- Consistent judging
- Experience calculated more reasonably
- Fewer demi-humans
- For people to take it seriously
- Giant rodents
- Infestation of fiends
- Introduction of new deities
- More "heroic" adventures
- More bards having a good time (a favorite here at HQ)
- More intangible rewards
- More PCs involved in plot lines
- More rust monsters (where are all the rust monsters anyway?)
- New organizations to join
- Other cities to rival Ravens Bluff
- Roleplaying bonus experience
- Shorter adventures
- Special mission tournaments for particular faiths, races, classes
- Stricter adherence to character rules
- Time travel
- Tougher opponents like rakshasa, medusa, etc.
- Travel to other planes
- Travel outside the city, wilderness adventures (lots of votes)
- Treasure distributed throughout a module, rather than all at the end
- Use of Charisma by judges, not just Comeliness

Some suggestions deserved individual response:

- Downtime Activities—Interactive activities at conventions serve as campaign "downtime." Look there for chances to buy land, recruit followers, join guilds, and more. If you do not find what you want at an interactive, talk to the Regional Director of LIVING CITY, Dan Donnelly.
- Have HQ run the knighthoods and City Watch—HQ has sought individuals to run parts of the LIVING CITY campaign, not only to make their existence possible (we don't have the time) but also to empower members.
- Money certificates—We are trying, despite appearances, not to go certificate-happy in the campaign. Certification of magical items is necessary for game control, but we do not plan to certify non-magical items or money.
- Several people made suggestions to bring back rules or options that have been disallowed. We chose to disallow certain rules to keep the campaign flavor, and to simplify the burden on a LIVING CITY judge. These choices were necessary for campaign survivability, and we stand by them.

Many of these good suggestions will not happen unless an author takes one and runs with it. If you see a suggestion you want to help implement, write it up as a tournament or organization and submit it. It's up to you.

The last question asked about a proposed subscription-only quarterly LIVING CITY Newsletter, which would contain gossip and plot elements, NPCs and PCs, businesses, and other campaign-enriching material. We asked if members would be interested, and whether they would prefer a four-page issue for $6 per year or an eight-page issue for $12 per year. The overwhelming response favored the eight-page issue. Look for a sampler in the January POLYHEDRON newszine.

Proposed Policy Changes

In our continuing tradition of consulting members before making policy or rule changes, we announce the proposal of two policy changes. Please consider them and send us your comments by regular mail or e-mail (contact information on page 2) by December 31st, 1996. Your input makes a difference.

1. LIVING™ Setting Item Auctions

We propose to disallow the sale or auction of LIVING setting magical or other items for cash or other real world consideration, including charity auctions. While LIVING CITY magical items do raise a considerable amount of money for charities, we can raise money by auctioning other items. The recent abuses involving players selling their magical items for cash can cast the Network in a bad light.

2. LIVING CITY Tournament Acceptance

We propose to accept LIVING CITY tournament submissions only from authors who have written at least one event with pre-generated characters. First-time authors should try their hand at situations where they can control PC powers and abilities before embarking on a LIVING CITY event. There has been a cry for better modules, and due to the number of LIVING CITY events we receive, we can now afford to be choosy. ❑

GAME FAIR EARLY BIRD & JUDGE REGISTRATION FORM

Please PRINT all information clearly! Your badge number (QSN) is the same assigned in previous years. If you do not have a QSN number, leave this space blank. RPGA® Network members **must** include membership numbers.

This form is for RPGA Network event judges only. A complete form can be requested from the address below. If you are under 18 years of age and are registering as a judge, a parent or guardian must co-sign this agreement. Illegible applications or improperly signed forms will be returned.

Photocopy this form for your records. Mail this form to:
GEN CON® Game Fair, 201 Sheridan Springs Road, Lake Geneva WI 53147 USA

(Place your address label here)

Last name *(Please print)* First name Initial

Address

City State/Province

Postal/Zip code Country

(_____) _____ (_____) _____
Daytime phone Evening phone

☐ I have moved in the past 12 months! *(Please list previous address)*

Previous address

City State/Province Postal/Zip code

ADMISSION PRICE:

(Check and pay only one)

☐ Early Bird registration ($40) non-refundable!
☐ Judge fee ($40)
☐ Assistant judge fee ($40)

SPECIAL T-SHIRT OFFER:

Judges and Early Birds can receive a limited edition T-shirt for only $7.95 (price higher outside U. S.). Check the box that applies and include payment with this form:

☐ T-shirt mailed to U.S. address ($7.95)
☐ T-shirt mailed to Canadian address ($11.95)
☐ T-shirt mailed to overseas address ($15.95)

Please indicate your T-shirt size:
☐ Large ☐ X-Large
☐ XX-Large ☐ XXX-Large

Prices include shipping.
T-shirts will be mailed with housing info in April.

METHOD OF PAYMENT:

(U.S. funds only, payable to GEN CON® Game Fair)

☐ Money order ☐ VISA ☐ Master Card

Card holder's name *(Please PRINT)*

Credit card number

Exp. date Authorized signature

JUDGE INFO:

Birthdate: _____
Badge # (QSN): _____
RPGA Network #: _____

SCHEDULING INFORMATION:

Arrival date _____ Time _____
Departure date _____ Time _____

If you are under 18 years old, please have a parent or legal guardian read and sign the following.

I am aware that my son/daughter is offering to volunteer at the GEN CON® Game Fair in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 7–10, 1997. I have no objections and will see to it that he/she meets the obligation of arriving at the convention and meets the standards described above. I am aware that by the state law of Wisconsin, a minor must be accompanied by an adult to register in a hotel or motel.

Print parent/Guardian name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

OTHER REQUESTS:

☐ Please send membership information on the RPGA® Network
☐ Please send info on the February 6–9, 1997 WINTER FANTASY™ convention in Milwaukee

☐ Volunteer to Judge RPGA® Network events or the AD&D® Open Tournament
Circle the slots you want to judge

AD&D Open, 3-round team		2	3	4		6	7	8		10	11s	12s	13f
AD&D Feature, 3-round	1			4		6		8	9s	10s		12f	
AD&D Special, 2-round		2					7				11		13f
AD&D Masters, 2-round**	1		3					8	9		11f		13f
AD&D Grand Masters**								8		10			
AD&D Paragon**		2							9				
AD&D Benefit		2	3					8	9	10		12	
AD&D RAVENLOFT® Game, 2-round team	1			4			7			10f		12f	
AD&D Network Clubs, 2-round team				4			7				11f		13f
AD&D LIVING CITY™ Benefit**			3				7						13
AD&D LIVING CITY Feature**	1							8				12	
AD&D LIVING CITY Game Fair Exclusive**		2				6			9				
AD&D LIVING DEATH™ Feature**		2		4					9		11		
AD&D LIVING DEATH Enigma**			3							10			13
AD&D LIVING JUNGLE™ Feature**	1			4		6					11		
AD&D LIVING JUNGLE Challenge**			3				7			10			
TSR's New Sci-Fi Game	1					6			9			12	13
Amber Feature			3			6					11		
Champions Feature				4			7			10m			
Call of Cthulhu Feature		2m						8		10		12	
DRAGONLANCE®: FIFTH AGE™ Special		2				6			9				13
Masterbook/D6: Indiana Jones Feature				4				8m	9				
Paranoia Feature	1						7m					12	
Shadowrun Virtual Seattle Feature				4m		6			9		11		
Star Wars Feature			3								11		13m

** Members Only event, f = final, s = semi-final, m = optional masters event

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Received: _____ **Processed:** _____
M.O.#: _____ **Date:** _____
Rtnd/Dpst: _____ **Name:** _____

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ATTENTION GAME FAIR ATTENDEES!

GET PRIORITY HOUSING INFORMATION!

JUDGE!

Register to Judge Network Events for the 1997 GEN CON® Game Fair & Festival now! This convention held August 7-10, 1997 at Milwaukee's Wisconsin Center will feature entertainment, manufacturers, and the world's finest game competitions. We expect nearly 30,000 people from a dozen countries!

REGISTER BY JAN. 31 TO RECEIVE:

- Reduced $40 admission for all four days ($45 after January 31, and $50 at the door).
- Priority status for hotel reservation information (immediately reserve rooms upon receipt of housing information).
- First priority to register for all events at the show (program books will be mailed in May).
- An offer to purchase a limited edition convention T-shirt for just $7.95 (includes handling and shipping).

The 1997 GEN CON Game Fair and Festival
August 7-10, 1997 at Milwaukee's Wisconsin Center

Photocopy this form for your records.
Mail this form to:
GEN CON® Game Fair
201 Sheridan Springs Road
Lake Geneva WI 53147 USA

• CONVENTION ADMISSION •

The admission price for judges is $40—half of which will be refunded after the convention if you fulfill the minimum requirements for judge status. To receive a $20 rebate, you must run a minimum of 3 full gaming sessions (full time slots) or 6 half sessions, and you must judge at least 6 players per session.

If you sign up to judge the minimum number of gaming sessions, you will be sent a judge badge that will admit you to the convention for all four days. You must still purchase event tickets to participate in events.

• DEADLINE •

The registration deadline is extremely important! Your Registration Form must be postmarked by **January 31, 1997** to receive all the benefits described above.

• JUDGE FEES •

To register, submit the fee and the form on the reverse . This fee also goes toward your convention registration fee, and it covers the cost of processing paperwork if you fail to run events. Half of this fee is nonrefundable. The balance will be refunded if you run events as scheduled and turn in event tickets and scoring information.

• CANCELLATION •

Written cancellation is the only acceptable form of notification. We **cannot accept** any cancellations made by telephone. Judges who cancel their attendance after March 15 are subject to a $20 cancellation fee. Judges who cancel after June 15 will forfeit the entire deposit unless reasonable cause can be presented in writing.

PLAN TO ATTEND THE 1997 GEN CON® GAME FAIR

SIGN UP NOW!

GEN CON Game Fair & Festival, August 7-10, 1997 at the Wisconsin Center, Milwaukee, WI.

This form must be postmarked by January 31, 1997.

WINTER FANTASY™ 97

Convention — **Wisconsin Center**

February 6-9 — **Milwaukee, WI**

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RPGA Members can test TSR's hot new Science Fiction game, Alternity™!

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Reserve your rooms today!

❄ Games for Judges!
- Living City™ Judge Only Special– judge 2 slots of Living City and 1 slot of any other event to qualify!
- AD&D® Judge Invitational– test your mettle against the best Network tournament game masters!

❄ New Schedule:
- Seminars scheduled between games, not during them, so you can choose both!
- Gaming party in the Hyatt for those who arrive Thursday night!

❄ Special Events!
- More World Preview seminars from great game companies! Get the secrets from the designers!
- Come eat Fajitas at the Awards Luncheon on Sunday, then stay to see who wins the 1996 Club Decathlon, who grabs the most stuff, and more!

OUR NEW SCHEDULE:

❄ **Thursday**
Gaming: 7 pm to 10:45 pm

❄ **Friday and Saturday**
Gaming: 8 am to 11:45 am
Seminars: Noon to 1 pm
1 pm to 2 pm
Gaming: 2 pm to 5:45 pm
Seminars: 6 pm to 7 pm
7 pm to 8 pm
Gaming: 8 pm to 11:45 pm

❄ **Sunday**
Gaming: 8 am to 11:45 am
Seminars: Noon to 1 pm
Awards Luncheon: 1:30 pm
Awards Ceremony: 2:30 pm

I am coming to Winter Fantasy!

Name: _____ RPGA # _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: ___ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Send form to: Winter Fantasy, Attn: Sandy Kinney, 201 Sheridan Springs Road, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

☑ **Fees (check applicable lines):**
___ $20–Pre-reg Player postmarked by Dec 31st (Registrations mailed after this date will be returned unprocessed)
___ $30–On-Site Admission
___ $15–Judge registration (3 slots or more)

☑ **Circle the games you want to judge and/or play on the grid below. You can pre-reg to play a maximum of 4 events (excluding Network Club). Add the fees listed with each event to your registration fee. Don't forget the awards luncheon.**

Total Fees Enclosed: $ _____

Circle "J" or "P" for the games you want to judge or play. Please don't circle both.		Times	Thursday	Friday			Saturday			Sunday	
			7pm	8am	2pm	8pm	8am	2pm	8pm	8am	1:30p
		Slots	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
AD&D Feature (2-round)	970000	$2		J or P		J or P	J or P		J or F		
AD&D Masters/Grand Masters	970001	$1			J or P		J or P			J or G	
AD&D Special	970002	$1	J or P	J or P					J or P	J or P	
Dragonlance®: Fifth Age™ Game	970003	$1		J or P		J or P	J or P				
Alternity™ Sci-Fi Game Playtest	970004	Free	J or P		J or P				J or P		
AD&D Judge Invitational (2-round)	970005	$2	P			P		F			
AD&D Network Clubs Challenge	970006	Special**			J			J			
Living City Benefit	970007	$5		J or P			J or P	J or P			
Living City Feature	970008	$1	J or P		J or P				J or P		
Living City Judge Only Special	970009	$1								J or P	
Living City Interactive	970010	$1				J or P					
Living Death™ Enigma	970011	$1				J or P		J or P		J or P	
Living Death Feature	970012	$1	J or P		J or P				J or P		
Living Jungle™ Challenge	970013	$1		J or P				J or P		J or P	
Living Jungle Feature	970014	$1	J or P			J or P	J or P				
Mayfair Game	970015	$1	J or P						J or P		
FASA Corp Game	970016	$1		J or P			J or P				
White Wolf Game	970017	$1				J or P		J or P			
West End Game	970018	$1			J or P					J or P	
Awards Fajita Luncheon	970019	**$15**									**Eat**
Network Volunteer			V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V

** To register for the club event, a club officer should send $6 along with the club name, the names of the players and the slot desired. Players should not register individually for this event.

Registration forms postmarked after December 31, 1996, will be returned unprocessed. Confirmation of pre-registration (badges and event tickets) will be sent by mail by January 16, 1997.

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Polyhedron® NEWSZINE

Issue #124

In This Issue:

- New *Masque of the Red Death* kits.
- Modern Minions of Cthulhu.
- The Land of Vecna... in the RAVENLOFT campaign setting.

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